THE·NEW·HUDSON SHAKESPEARE

Helen Lang
1922

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A Midſommer nights dreame.

As it hath beene ſundry times publickely acted, by the Right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

¶Imprinted at London, for *Thomas Fiſher*, and are to be ſoulde at his ſhoppe, at the Signe of the White Hart, in *Fleeteſtreete*. 1600.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE, FIRST QUARTO (FISHER'S QUARTO)

THE NEW HUDSON SHAKESPEARE

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
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PREFACE

The text of this edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is based upon a collation of the Quartos of 1600, the seventeenth century Folios, the Globe edition, the Cambridge (W. A. Wright) edition of 1891, and that of Delius (1882). As compared with the text of the earlier editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, it is conservative. Exclusive of changes in spelling, punctuation, and stage directions, very few emendations by eighteenth century and nineteenth century editors have been adopted; and these, with every variation from the First Folio, are indicated in the textual notes. These notes are printed immediately below the text, so that a reader or student may see at a glance the evidence in the case of a disputed reading, and have some definite understanding of the reasons for those differences in the text of Shakespeare which frequently surprise and very often annoy. Such an arrangement should be of special help in the case of a play universally read and very often acted, as no two actors or interpreters agree in adhering to one text. A consideration of the more poetical, or the more dramatically effective, of two variant readings will often lead to rich results in awakening a spirit of discriminating interpretation and in developing true creative criticism. In no sense is this a textual variorum edition. The variants given are only those of importance and high authority.

The spelling and the punctuation of the text are modern, except in the case of verb terminations in *-ed*, which, when the *e* is silent, are printed with the apostrophe in its place. This is the general usage in the First Folio. The important contractions in the First Folio which may indicate Elizabethan pronunciation ('i' th'' for 'in the,' for example) are also followed. Modern spelling has to a certain extent been adopted in the text variants; but the original spelling has been retained wherever its peculiarities have been the basis for important textual criticism and emendation.

With the exception of the position of the textual variants, the plan of this edition is similar to that of the old Hudson Shakespeare. It is impossible to specify the various instances of revision and rearrangement in the matter of the Introduction and the interpretative notes, but the endeavor has been to retain all that gave the old edition its unique place and to add the results of what seems vital and permanent in later inquiry and research. In this edition, as in the volumes of the series already published, the sections entitled Sources, Date of Composition, Early Editions, Versification and Diction, Scene of Action, Duration of Action, Title of the Play, Dramatic Construction and Development, with Analysis by Act and Scene, and Stage History, are wholly new. In this edition, too, is introduced a chronological chart, covering the important events of Shakespeare's life as man and as author, and indicating in parallel columns his relation to contemporary writers and events. As a guide to reading clubs and literary societies, there has been appended to the Introduction a table of the distribution of characters, giving the acts and scenes in which each character appears and the number of lines spoken by each. The index of words and phrases has been

so arranged as to serve both as a glossary and as a guide to the more important grammatical differences between Elizabethan and modern English.

While it is important that the principle of *suum cuique* be attended to so far as is possible in matters of research and scholarship, it is becoming more and more difficult to give every man his own in Shakespearian annotation. The amount of material accumulated is so great that the identity-origin of much important comment and suggestion is either wholly lost or so crushed out of shape as to be beyond recognition. Instructive significance perhaps attaches to this in editing the works of one who quietly made so much of materials gathered by others. But the list of authorities given on page lxvii will indicate the chief source of much that has gone to enrich the value of this edition. Especial acknowledgment is here made of the obligations to Dr. William Aldis Wright and Dr. Horace Howard Furness, whose work in the collation of Quartos, Folios, and the more important English and American editions of Shakespeare has been of so great value to all subsequent editors and investigators.

With regard to the general plan of this revision of Hudson's Shakespeare, Professor W. P. Trent, of Columbia University, has offered valuable suggestions and given important advice.

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INTRODUCTION

NOTE. In citations from Shakespeare's plays and nondramatic poems the numbering has reference to the Globe edition, except in the case of this play, where the reference is to this edition.

I. SOURCES

A Midsummer Night's Dream[1] is one of the most original conceptions in poetic literature. This originality lies in the imaginative skill with which a main plot — that of Theseus and the Athenian Lovers — and two subplots, — that of the Fairies and that of the Clowns with the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, — all derived from widely different sources, are compacted into a harmonious and convincing dream drama, of which the scenery, the atmosphere, and the actors are peculiarly English and distinctly Elizabethan.

THE DREAM DRAMA

The dream form of the mediæval romance and the allegory of the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries had to a certain extent been suggested for dramatic purposes by Lyly in *The Woman in the Moone* and in *Sapho and Phao*, but in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare goes far beyond Lyly's "Remember all is but a poet's dreame,"[2]

[1] See page xlii, Title of the Play. On the hyphen so often inserted between *Midsummer* and *Night's*, see subnote, page 3.

[2] From the Prologue to *The Woman in the Moone*:

> This but the shadow of our author's dreame,
> Argues the substance to be neere at hand;

flashes back to Chaucer's "God turne us every dreem to gode!"[1] and anticipates his own profound farewell to the world in *The Tempest:*

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

The dream atmosphere suggested by the title prevails throughout the play. It is introduced when in her first speech Hippolyta says, "Four nights will quickly dream away the time," I, i, 8; and in the epilogue speech with which the play closes, Puck indicates that all will be well if the spectators only remember that the thing is "but a dream," V, i, 420. Cf. Bottom's words, IV, i, 201–213.

The Main Plot

Hints for the description of the wedding of Theseus and for the adventures of the Athenian courtiers are taken from *The Knightes Tale*,[2] one of the most popular of Chaucer's poems in Elizabethan England,[3] and from Sir Thomas

> At whose appearance I most humbly crave,
> That in your forehead she may read content.
> If many faults escape in her discourse,
> Remember all is but a poet's dreame.

Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 415–421.

[1] *The Hous of Fame*, I, i. Cf. *The Romaunt of the Rose*, 1–20.

[2] See Sidgwick, *The Sources and Analogues of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*; Proescholdt, *On the Sources of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*; ten Brink, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XIII, 92.

[3] It was dramatized by Richard Edwardes in *Palæmon and Arcyte*, acted before the Queen at Christ Church in 1566. A *Palamon and Arcite* was acted at the Rose Theatre in 1594. *The Knightes Tale* is also the theme of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, in the composition of which some editors suppose that Shakespeare collaborated with Fletcher.

North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, Shakespeare's great source-book for Greek and Latin history and biography.

1. *The Knightes Tale.* In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare's indebtedness to *The Knightes Tale* may be summed up as extending to (1) "the wood, a league without the town," I, i, 165, which is the scene of the greater part of the action: (2) the framework of the action in the celebration of the marriage of Theseus; (3) the theme of friendship crossed by love; (4) allusions to May-day observances; (5) the description of the hunting party, IV, i, 100–124; (6) the reference to the heroic past of Theseus, V, i, 51; (7) the name 'Philostrate'; (8) such verbal resemblances as are indicated in the notes, I, i, 20, 167, etc.

2. *North's Plutarch.* From Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*[1] come (1) a specific reference to the 'Amazon' bride; (2) the spelling 'Hippolyta'; (3) the incidents referred to in II, i, 79–80; (4) the allusion by Theseus to his "kinsman Hercules," V, i, 47; (5) the names 'Egeus' (Ægeus), 'Ægle' (Ægles), 'Perigenia' (Perigouna), 'Ariadne,' 'Antiopa.'

The names 'Lysander' and 'Demetrius' are obviously from Plutarch's *Lives* of Lysander the Spartan and Demetrius Poliorcetes.

The Fairies[2]

The fairy lore of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of Shakespeare's most winsome and original creations, so potent

[1] See Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, pp. 278–290.

[2] For the derivation of the word 'fairy' see Murray, *The Oxford Dictionary;* for fairy lore see Keightley, *Fairy Mythology;* Thistleton Dyer, *Folk Lore of Shakespeare;* Maury, *Les Fées du Moyen Age;* Hense, *Shakespeares Sommernachtstraum erläutert;* E. K. Chambers, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'Warwick' edition, Appendix A.

in subsequent influence upon literature[1] that Lamb may well have said that Shakespeare "invented the fairies." The matter upon which he worked came mainly from two sources, — the popular lore of elf and fay handed down from Celtic and Teutonic mythologies, and the fairy literature of the Arthur and Charlemagne cycles of romance, available to Shakespeare in Chaucer, in Mallory, in Lord Berners, and in Spenser. Into this fairy-lore, woven of popular tradition and the literature of high romance, Shakespeare introduces elements of classical myth and story which give *vraisemblance* to the presence of elves and fays at the court of Theseus and in the woods hard by the gates of ancient Athens.

Oberon

In Chaucer there is distinct recognition of a fairy court presided over by a king and a queen, but in *The Marchantes Tale*, 983–985, Pluto is called the king and Proserpine the queen:

> Pluto, that is the king of fayërye,
> And many a lady in his companye,
> Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne.[2]

1. *Huon of Bordeaux.* The name 'Oberon' as that of the fairy king came to England from Germany[3] through France,

[1] From Drayton and Herrick to Shelley and Hood this direct influence is obvious. Milton's indebtedness to the play as a whole is, as the notes will show, very marked and extensive.

[2] Cf. *The Tale of the Wyf of Bathe*, 1–5:

> In tholde dayes of the king Arthour,
> Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
> All was this land fulfild of fayërye.
> The elf-queen, with hir Joly companye,
> Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede.

[3] See note on Teutonic origin of the name, II, i, 20.

the name-stages being probably *Alberich* (*Elberich*, or *Elferich*, the 'Elf-king' of German folklore), *Alberon*, *Auberon*, *Oberon*. 'Auberon' is first mentioned as *le Roi du royaume de la fëerie* in the thirteenth-century Charlemagne romance, *Huon de Bordeaux*, which was "done into English" as *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux*[1] by Sir John Bourchier, Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart. From this version, probably printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1534, we take the passage in which Oberon first came into English literature. The description of the dwarf king has a haunting beauty which suggests an ultimate Celtic origin:

> . . . the way is so full of ye fayrey and straunge thynges, that suche as passe that way are lost, for in that wood abydyth a kynge of ye fayrey namyd Oberon. He is of heyght but of .iii. fote, and crokyd shulderyd, but yet he hathe an aungelyke vysage, so that there is no mortall man that seethe hym but that taketh grete pleasure to beholde his fase.

There is ample evidence of the popularity of *Huon of Bordeaux* in England during the second half of the sixteenth century, and the probability is that Shakespeare derived his knowledge of Oberon from that work at first hand. This probability is strengthened by the following considerations: (1) in both the fairy king has intimate connection with the Orient[2]; and (2) such details in Shakespeare's play as the griffin, II, i, 229, and the "fearful wild-fowl," III, i, 29, are found in *Huon of Bordeaux*.

2. *Lost Plays*. It is possible that the link of connection between *Huon of Bordeaux* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* may have been the play, now lost, referred to by

[1] Edited by S. L. Lee for the Early English Text Society.
[2] Cf. II, i, 69. Cf. also II, i, 20–23, 124–125.

Henslowe in his *Diary* as *hewen of burdokes* (*burdoche*). According to Henslowe's note [1] this play was popular enough to be produced by the 'servants' of the Earl of Sussex three times in 1593–1594. Another possible link is the "Honourable Entertainment," introducing 'Auberon' as the fairy king, which was "given to the Queen's Majesty in Progress at Elvetham in Hampshire by the Right Hon. the Earl of Hertford" in 1591.[2]

The existence and the popularity of a pre-Shakespearian play, or pre-Shakespearian plays, now lost, that dealt with the king of the fairies is further attested by references in Nash and in Greene. In Nash's preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589, it is said that, but for the poets, the actors "might have anticked it until this time up and down the country with the *King of Fairies*, and dined every day at the pease-porridge ordinary with *Delphrigus*"; and in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, an old actor is made to boast of having been "famous for *Delphrigus* and the *King of the Fairies*."

3. *Greene's James IV.* Printed in 1598, but produced eight or nine years before, was a notable play by Robert Greene, the full title of which ran, *The Scottish Historie of James IV, slaine at Flodden. Intermixed with a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oboram*[3] *Kyng of Fayeries.* While Ward[4] holds that "the general idea of the machinery of

[1] The entry is:

Rd at hewen of burdoche, the 28 of desembr 1593	iij^{li}.x^{s}.
Rd at hewen of burdokes, the 3 of Jenewary 1593	xiiij^{s}.
Rd at hewen, the 11 of Jenewary 1593	v^{s}.

[2] See Nichols, *The Progresses of Queen Elizabeth.*

[3] 'Oberon' is the spelling in the body of the play.

[4] *History of English Dramatic Literature*, II, 85.

Oberon and his fairy-court" was in all probability taken by Shakespeare from Greene, most readers will feel that except the name of the king of the fairies there is little in common between Greene's play and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[1]

4. *The Faerie Queene*. Before the composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Oberon had entered immortal English poetry. Spenser published the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* in 1590, and there (II. x. 75) the "mightie Oberon" appears as the latest sovereign of "all Elfin kind." In II. i. 6, Oberon's connection with Huon is mentioned in the description of Sir Guyon:

> Well could he tourney, and in lists debate,
> And knighthood tooke of good Sir Huon's hand,
> When with king Oberon he came to Faery land.

According to Johnson, while fairies in Shakespeare's time were much in fashion, with common tradition making them familiar, "Spenser's poem had made them great."

Titania

As already indicated, Chaucer calls the elf-queen Proserpine.[2] In the 'entertainment' given to Queen Elizabeth in Hampshire in 1591, referred to above, Auberon's wife is called 'Aureola.' 'Gloriana' (sometimes 'Tanaquil') is Spenser's name for his allegorical fairy queen. The 'Queen Mab' of *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 53, is obviously a folklore

[1] See Furness, *Variorum*, Appendix, 278–283.

[2] This appellation persists in Elizabethan literature. In the lyric beginning "Hark, all you la[illegible]hat do sleep," Campion speaks of "the fairy queen, Proserpina."

name.[1] As far as is known, Shakespeare was the first to apply the name 'Titania' to the queen of the fairies.[2] The name occurs in Ovid (see note, II, i, 60) as an epithet of Diana,[3] and Keightley in a now famous sentence indicates the peculiar appropriateness of the name for the fairy queen: "It was the belief of those days that the Fairies were the same as the classic Nymphs, the attendants of Diana — 'That fourth kind of spiritis,' says King James, 'quhilk be the gentilis was called Diana, and her wandering court, and amongs us called the *Phairie*.' The Fairy-queen was therefore the same as Diana." Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (see below) also gives Diana as one of the names of "the lady of the fairies."

The Royal Quarrel

The quarrel between Oberon and Titania was not improbably suggested by the misunderstanding between the king and the queen of the fairies (Pluto and Proserpine) in Chaucer's *The Marchantes Tale*. What makes this the more likely is the further point of resemblance between Chaucer's poem and Shakespeare's play in the keen interest taken by the king of the fairies in the hap and adventures of mortals.

[1] Beaufort mentions *Mabh* as the chief of the Irish fairies. Attempts have been made to identify Queen Mab with Dame Abunde, the *domina Abundia* of mediæval writers.

[2] Simrock, *Die Quellen des Shakespeare*, makes an ingenious but unconvincing plea for deriving 'Titania' from *Titti*, 'children,' with reference to the kidnapping propensities of the fairies.

[3] As 'Titania' is not found in any English version of Ovid that appeared in Shakespeare's lifetime, it has been inferred that he must have studied Ovid in the original. See Baynes, *Shakespeare Studies*.

Puck

The popularity of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* soon led to the identification of 'Puck' and the 'Robin Goodfellow' (cf. German *Knecht Ruprecht*) or 'Hobgoblin'[1] of popular tradition. As used earlier, 'Puck'[2] is a generic term[3] meaning a malicious or mischievous spirit or demon of popular superstition. In Middle English literature, as in Langland's *Vision*, 'the pouke' is commonly identified with the Biblical devil, a meaning that seems to survive even in Spenser's use of the word.[4] From this association Shakespeare has forever set 'Puck' free. While the general idea of a fairy court is derived from literary sources, from classical lore, from *chansons de geste*, and from earlier English poetry from Chaucer to Spenser, the Puck or Robin Goodfellow matter was distinctly popular, and without a doubt Shakespeare drew much from the living traditions in the England of the sixteenth century. "He adopted to the full the Romance scheme of a fairy-court, and brilliantly extended it by turning the rustic Puck, familiar to every English homestead, into Oberon's court-jester." — Herford.

1. *Scot's Discoverie*. After popular tradition the chief source of Shakespeare's knowledge of the characteristics of Robin Goodfellow seems to have been Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*,[5] published in 1584, a work from

[1] See note, II, 1, 40.

[2] Old English *puca*, 'goblin.' Cf. Old Norse *puki*, 'mischievous demon'; Welsh *pwca*; Irish *puca* (*pooka*). "The ulterior history of the name and the question whether it was originally Teutonic or Celtic, is unsettled." — Murray.

[3] See note 7, page 2, Dramatis Personæ.

[4] *Epithalamion*, 341.

[5] Edited by B. Nicholson, London, 1886.

which Shakespeare afterwards drew important material for the composition of *Macbeth*. Scot was a Kentish man who, after years of study at Oxford, returned to his native county and gave himself to gardening and hop-growing.[1] *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* is a frank and able exposure of the absurdities of the popular belief in witches, fairies, and occult phenomena generally. The value of his book to-day is in the detailed account of the processes of sorcery and the minutiæ of witch lore and all popular superstitions.[2] The scope of the work is indicated in the original title which is given in facsimile on the page opposite.

Scot in discussing the Incubus says (spelling modernized):

Indeed your grandam's maids were wont to set a bowl of milk before him and his cousin, Robin Goodfellow, for grinding of malt[3] or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight,[4] and you have also heard that he would chafe exceedingly, if the maid or goodwife of the house, having compassion of his nakedness, laid any clothes for him, besides his mess of white bread and milk which was his standing fee. For in that case he saith: What have we here? Hemton hamten, here will I never more tread nor stampen.

2. *Tarlton's Newes.* In Tarlton's *Newes out of Purgatorie*, printed in 1589–1590, occurs the following passage (spelling modernized):

Think me to be one of those *Familiares Lares* that were rather pleasantly disposed than endued with any hurtful influence, as Hob Thrust, Robin Goodfellow, and such like spirits, as they term them,

[1] He is said to have introduced hop-growing into England. His treatise on the subject, *The Hoppe-Garden*, first published in 1574, was thrice reprinted before 1580.

[2] In 1597 King James issued his *Dæmonologie, in Forme of a Dialogue*, as a reply to Scot and other skeptics.

[3] Cf. II, i, 35–36. [4] Cf. V, i, 381–382.

The diſcouerie of witchcraft,

Wherein the lewde dealing of witches *and witchmongers is notablie detected, the* knauerie of coniurors, the impietie of inchan*tors, the follie of ſoothſaiers, the impudent falſ*hood of couſenors, the infidelitie of atheiſts, *the peſtilent practiſes of Pythoniſts, the* curioſitie of figurecaſters, the va*nitie of dreamers, the beggerlie art of Alcumyſtrie,*

The abhomination of idolatrie, the hor*rible art of poiſoning, the vertue and power of* naturall magike, and all the conueiances *of Legierdemaine and iuggling are deciphered:* and many other things opened, which *haue long lien hidden, howbeit* verie neceſſarie to be knowne.

Heerevnto is added a treatiſe vpon the *nature and ſubſtance of ſpirits and diuels,* &c: all latelie written *by Reginald Scot* Eſquire.

1. Iohn. 4. 1.

Beleeue not euerie ſpirit, but trie the ſpirits, whether they are of God; for manie falſe prophets are gone out into the world, &c.

1584

of the buttery, famoused in every old wive's chronicle for their mad, merry pranks. Therefore, sith my appearance to thee is in resemblance of a spirit, think that I am as pleasant a goblin as the rest, and will make thee as merry before I part, as ever Robin Goodfellow made the country wenches at their creambowls.

3. *Churchyard's Strange Farlies.*[1] In *A Handfull of Gladsome Verses given to the Queen's Majesty at Woodstock this Progress*, 1592, Thomas Churchyard has the following stanzas (spelling modernized):

Strange farlies[2] fathers told,
Of fiends and hags of hell;
And how that Circe, when she would,
Could skill of sorcery well;

And how old thin-faced wives,
That roasted crabs by night,
Did tell of monsters in their lives,
That now prove shadows light.

. . . . . .

But where foul sluts did dwell,
Who used to sit up late,
And would not scour their pewter well,
There came a merry mate.

To kitchen or to hall,
Or place where sprites resort;
Then down went dish and platters all,
To make the greater sport.

A further sport fell out,
When they to spoil did fall;
Rude Robin Goodfellow, the lout,
Would skim the milk-bowls all.

[1] First cited in this connection by E. K. Chambers.
[2] marvels. 'Ferly' is the usual form of the word.

And search the cream-pots too,
For which poor milk-maid weeps,
God wot what such mad guests will do
When people soundly sleeps.

4. *Nash's Terrors.* In 1594 was printed Nash's *Terrors of the Night*, in which occurs this passage (spelling modernized):

The Robin good fellows, elfs, fairies, hobgoblins of our latter age, which idolatrous former days and the fantastical world of Greece ycleped fauns, satyrs, dryads, and hamadryads, did most of their merry pranks in the night. Then ground they malt, and had hempen shirts for their labours, danced in rounds in green meadows, pinched maids in their sleep that swept not their houses clean, and led poor travellers out of their way notoriously.

The above are the only works obviously anterior to the composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which are given such characteristics of Robin Goodfellow as Shakespeare used. *The Life of Robin Goodfellow, Robin Goodfellow; his Mad Pranks and Merrie Iests*, and many ballads, tracts, and broadsides on the same theme, are undoubtedly subsequent to Shakespeare's play.

The Clowns

So strong is the 'local colour' and so peculiarly vivid the humorous touches in the description of "the crew of patches, rude mechanicals," that it may well be supposed that everything in connection with this portion of the play owes its inspiration to the author's recollection of such acting of interludes by rustics, village-companies, and guilds, as was not uncommon in Warwickshire in Shakespeare's youth. Shakespeare himself had anticipated this comic interlude of Bottom and his fellows in the "entertainment" of the "Nine Worthies" in the last act of *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Pyramus and Thisbe

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe as told by Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 55–166, must have been perfectly familiar to an Elizabethan audience, and so the burlesque interlude would be effective and popular. Chaucer had referred to the story in *The Marchantes Tale* and dealt with it in *The Legende of Good Women*. A "boke intituled *Perymus and Thesbye*" was entered on *The Stationers' Registers* in 1562–1563. Probably Shakespeare knew the story through Arthur Golding's famous version of Ovid, begun in 1565 and completed in 1575. Verbal similarities, as well as the fact that in other plays Shakespeare shows his indebtedness to Golding, strengthen this view. "Golding's rendering of Ovid had been one of Shakespeare's best-loved books in youth." — Sidney Lee. It has been held that the interlude was based upon "A New Sonet of Pyramus and Thisbie," signed 'I. Thompson,' in Clement Robinson's miscellany, *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, published in 1584. The arguments in favor of this are that Shakespeare in other plays seems to have borrowed from this miscellany, and that the "New Sonet" contains rhetorical exaggerations of the very kind which Shakespeare holds up to ridicule.

Oberon's Vision, II, i, 145–165

Oberon's speech to Puck, II, i, 145–165, containing the description of the "mermaid on a dolphin's back" and the vision of the "fair vestal throned by the west," one of the most exquisite passages of description in Shakespeare, has given rise to a whole library of comment (see note, II, i, 145–165). From the time that Rowe, Shakespeare's first

editor, pointed out that some kind of allegory was intended, interpreters have been busy with the dainty words of the fairy king, some, like Halpin,[1] finding allegorical significance and historical allusion in every syllable. It is not improbable that the speech has the historical background described in the two works which Halpin makes so much use of as authorities, *Laneham's Letter: whearin Part of the Entertainment untoo the Queenz Majesty, at Killingworth Castle in Warwick Sheer, in this Soomerz Progrest 1575, is signified;* and Gascoigne's *Princely Pleasures, with the Masque intended to have been presented before Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle.*

The Love-Juice, II, i, 167–169

Flowers and fruits that have changed their hue or shape through mysterious influences,[2] and love-juices and potions distilled from magic herbs are the common property of classical lore, mediæval romance, and popular poetry; but researchers have been fain to find a distinct literary source for the pivotal incident of the love-juice with which Oberon bids Puck anoint the eyes of Titania and the Athenian lovers. Some have found such a source in *The Marchantes Tale*, where Chaucer makes Pluto, "king of fayërye," give "agayne his sighte" to old January. Others find a source in *The Flower and the Leaf* (cf. note, IV, i, 70). But a more likely source is a love-potion incident in the famous Spanish romance of *Diana Enamorada* . . Montemayor, a work from

[1] *Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer Night's Dream, illustrated by a comparison with Lylie's Endymion*, Shakespeare Society, 1843.

[2] Ovid gives examples, and in this connection it is interesting to recall that a "deep dark purple [illegible]" (Golding) is cast upon the berries of the mulberry tree by the blood of Pyramus.

which Shakespeare seems to have taken important suggestions for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. No English version of the *Diana* was published until 1598, but Bartholomew Yonge, the author of this, states in his preface that it was written sixteen years earlier, and Shakespeare may either have read it in manuscript or, as is more likely, have learned of the incident through hearing the work discussed.[1]

Bottom and the Ass's Head, III. i. 93-109

The origin of such a transformation, or "translation," as Bottom experienced at the hands of Puck, may have been popular lore and witch-superstition, but Scot in *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (see above) quotes, in order to ridicule, recorded instances. In considerable detail he tells the story of an English sailor who came within the power of a witch and was transformed by her into an ass. Scot gives as his authority Jean Bodin, who took the story "out of *M. Mal.*[2] which tale was delivered to *Sprenger* by a knight of the Rhodes." Scot also mentions the story of the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, and gives a witch's, or cozener's, formula "to set an horse's or an ass's head on a man's neck and shoulders."

II. DATE OF COMPOSITION

The date of composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* falls within 1598, the later time limit (*terminus ante quem*),

[1] A play called *The History of Felix and Philomena*, founded on the *Story of the Sleepeless Felismena* in the *Diana*, was acted at Greenwich in 1584.

[2] *Malleus Maleficarum*. Augustine refers to this story in *De Civitate Dei*, Lib. XVIII. Bodin's book is called *Liber de Dæmoniis*.

and 1590,[1] the earlier time limit (*terminus post quem*). The weight of evidence is in favor of 1594–1595.

External Evidence

Meres's Palladis Tamia. The only certain piece of external evidence for the date of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the mention of the play by Francis Meres in the *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury. Being the Second Part of Wits Commonwealth*, published in 1598. This establishes a positive *terminus ante quem*. Meres's famous list of Shakespeare plays in existence in 1598 is in the following passage:

As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnesse his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labours lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummer night dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy, his *Richard the second*, *Richard the third*, *Henry the fourth*, *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Iuliet*.

Henry Cuningham regards it as noteworthy that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* stands fifth in Meres's list of comedies, the fact affording in his opinion "some slight indication of Meres's belief, knowledge, or recollection that it was not amongst the very earliest of Shakespeare's plays."

Internal Evidence

1. *Allusion to Weather, II, i, 88–114.* In Forman's *Diary*, Bishop King's *Lectures upon* [illegible]es, Stowe's *Chronicle*, and Churchyard's poem, *Charitie*, there is cumulative evidence that in England the summer of 1594 was so excessively wet

[1] Elze, Karz, and Furnivall are [illegible] only editors of note who have suggested so early a date as 1590.

and cold as almost to constitute a national disaster. It is not improbable that Titania's account of the inversion of the seasons, II, i, 88–114, is based upon this. The passage suggests a contemporary and a topical allusion. It is a bit of superb description, but dramatically it is irrelevant.

2. "*A lion among ladies*," *III, i, 28*. In the eager endeavor to find a date of composition, stress has been put upon what Malone, who first drew attention to the matter, calls simply "an odd coincidence" between Bottom's fear that the lion would frighten the ladies, III, i, 28 (cf. Quince's words, I, ii, 66–67), and an incident which happened at the Scottish court, at the christening of Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I. One of the spectacles was a triumphal chariot drawn by a "black-moore." An old pamphlet[1] quoted by Malone says: "This chariot should have been drawne in by a lyon, but because his presence might have brought some feare . . . it was thought meete that the Moor should supply that room." This kind of incident would be very effective as matter for a topical allusion. As the christening of Prince Henry took place in 1594, what weight this matter has as evidence is in favor of that year as a *terminus post quem*.

3. "*The thrice three Muses*," *etc., V, i, 52–53*. In 1773 Warton suggested that the lines, V, i, 52–53 —

> The thrice three Muses[2] mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary —

might fix the date of the play near to the publication of Spenser's *The Teares of the Muses*, in 1591; five years later Steevens remarked that the reference might be to the tragic circumstances of Spenser's death "in 1598." As Spenser

[1] Reprinted in Somers's *Tracts*, II, 179.

[2] Cf. "thrise three learned Ladies," *The Faerie Queene*, I, x, 54.

died in 1599, the reference cannot be to his death unless, as has been suggested, the passage was interpolated as an effective contemporary allusion after the play was first produced. In 1840 Knight advanced the very probable supposition that the reference is to Greene, who died in dire poverty in 1592. 'Learning' would certainly be peculiarly applicable to Greene, who, *utriusque Academiae in Artibus Magister* ('Master of Arts of both Universities'), wrote more than once as the representative of the scholar-poets and 'University Wits.'

4. *North's Plutarch.* Investigation has made it probable that the edition of North's Plutarch used by Shakespeare in the composition of the plays taken from Roman history, was the second. This was published in 1595,[1] and suggestions from the *Life of Theseus* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* would also come in all likelihood from this reissue.

5. *Was the Play written for a Noble Marriage?* One of the interesting theories advanced regarding the composition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and its date, is that the play was written not primarily for the public stage, but for performance at the wedding festivities of some nobleman, at which Queen Elizabeth herself was present. "The praise of 'single-blessedness,' I, i, 74–75, may have been designed to please the ears of the maiden queen; and Oberon's vision, II, i, 145–165, contains a splendid piece of poetical homage to her." — Dowden. The masque-like character of the play, in this respect as in many others anticipating *The Tempest*,[2] the remarkable prominence given to the wedding of Theseus in the general framework, and the epithalamium-epilogue,

[1] The first edition appeared in 1579.

[2] Elze calls the performance of Bottom and his fellows "an anti-masque."

make this extremely likely. Tieck conjectured that the marriage in question was that of the Earl of Southampton to Elizabeth Vernon in 1598; Elze and Kurz held that it was that of the Earl of Essex to Frances, Lady Sidney, in 1590. The fatal objection to these hypotheses is that both these marriages were secret and such as could not meet with the favor of Queen Elizabeth. Fleay has made a convincing suggestion that the play may have graced the wedding of William Stanley, Earl of Derby, and Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford. The wedding took place at the Court at Greenwich on January 24, 1594–1595, and, as Stowe says, the "marriage feast was there most royally kept." Lord Derby took a personal interest in the stage and in dramatic work generally, a letter preserved in the Record Office describing him in June, 1599, as "penning comedies for the common players." It has also been suggested that the occasion of the composition of the play may have been the marriage of the famous patroness of poets, Lucy Harington, to Edward Russell, third Earl of Bedford, on December 12, 1594.

6. *Characteristics of Plot and Style.* Furnivall places the composition of the play in Shakespeare's very earliest period, the "time of mistaken identity and cross purposes, of more than two sets of lovers . . . before he had settled down to Italian story for the sources of his lighter plays." This does not allow for the marked growth of dramatic and formative power, the imaginative insight, the spontaneity, and the mastery of expression both sympathetic and creative, which the play shows as compared with *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. "Belonging to the same group as these early comedies, it is the best of them — and presumably the latest: it completes

the sequence." — Verity. Verplanck looked upon the play as one of those which "were first written in a comparative immaturity of the author's genius, and afterwards received large alterations and additions." The part of the Athenian lovers certainly has a good deal that, viewed by itself, would scarce do credit even to such a boyhood as Shakespeare's must have been. On the other hand, there is a large philosophy in Theseus's discourse of "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," a manly judgment in his reasons for preferring the "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," and a bracing freshness in the short dialogue of the chase, all in Shakespeare's more mature style. It is possible that what seem defects and immaturities, the fanciful quirks and far-fetched conceits, and the seeming weakness and juvenility in characterization, were designed to invest the play with such an air of dreaminess and unreality as would better sort with its general scope and spirit.

7. *Diction.* The puns, strained conceits, antitheses, artificial turns of expression, and other rhetorical devices, which abound in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, mark the play as early. The prevalence of rhyme in dialogue is always a mark of an early play except when its use is contingent on special reasons for its introduction, as in the masque portions of *The Tempest*. This must be remembered in connection with the masque-like character of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Much of the blank verse is of Shakespeare's earliest period; it is monotonous, regular and shows a marked tendency to end-stopped lines and freedom from feminine endings (see below, Versification and Diction). The prose of the dialogue in the comic passages indicates growth and development towards Shakespeare's great creative period.

III. EARLY EDITIONS

Quartos

Under the year 1600 the following license-entry appeared in *The Stationers' Registers:*[1]

8. octobris

Thomas ffyssher Entred for his copie vnder the handes of master Rodes and the Wardens A booke called *A mydsommer nightes Dreame* . . . . . vjd[2]

Within that year the book thus licensed was published with the title-page which is given in facsimile as the frontispiece of this volume. This is now generally known as the First Quarto (Q_1) or Fisher's Quarto.[3] In the same year appeared another Quarto with the following title: "A | Midsommer nights | dreame. | As it hath been sundry times pub- | *likely. acted, by the Right Honoura-* | ble, the Lord Chamberlain his | *seruants.* | *Written by William Shakespeare* | [Heraldic device — the Geneva Arms — a half-eagle and key, with the motto *Post Tenebras Lux*] *Printed by Iames Roberts*, 1600." This is usually called the Second Quarto (Q_2) or Roberts's Quarto. There is strong evidence that the First Quarto was printed from an authentic manuscript, and that the Second Quarto was a reprint, not necessarily pirated,[4] of the First,

[1] Professor E. Arber's *Transcripts of the Stationers Registers* (1554–1640), 4 vols., 1875–1877.

[2] sixpence. This was the usual price of a Quarto.

[3] The publisher's punning device of a kingfisher with the motto referring to the old belief in halcyon weather, is quaint and interesting.

[4] "It appears more likely that Fisher, who was not himself a printer as well as a publisher, got the second edition, if not the first

better arranged typographically, with some errors corrected, new stage directions added, but with punctuation decidedly inferior.

Folios

After the Quartos of 1600 there was no edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* until it appeared in the First Folio (1623), designated in this edition F_1. Here it stands eighth in the list of comedies, between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merchant of Venice*. The First Folio text seems to have been taken directly from that of the Second Quarto, with such additional detailed stage directions and insertions as indicate that a prompter's annotated copy must have been used to print from.

The Second Folio, F_2 (1632), corrects many of the misprints of the First Folio; and this corrected text is repeated with few changes, except in the way of slightly modernized spelling, in the Third Folio, F_3 (1663, 1664), and in the Fourth Folio, F_4 (1685).

Rowe's Editions

The first critical editor of Shakespeare's plays was Nicholas Rowe, poet laureate to George I. His first edition was issued in 1709 in six octavo volumes. In this edition Rowe, an experienced playwright, marked the entrances and exits of the characters, and introduced many new stage directions and directions for scene settings. In the Quartos there is no division of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* into acts and scenes, and in the Folios the acts only are indicated. Rowe

also, printed for him by Roberts, who was both; and that the issue of two editions in six months was simply due to the success of the play." — E. K. Chambers, 'Warwick' edition of the play.

made the subdivision into scenes, and added the first list of dramatis personæ. A second edition, in eight volumes, was published in 1714. Rowe followed very closely the text of the Fourth Folio, but modernized spelling, punctuation, and occasionally grammar.

IV. VERSIFICATION AND DICTION

Rhyme

In the history of the English drama rhyme as a vehicle of expression precedes blank verse and prose. Miracle plays, moral plays, and interludes are all in rhyming measures. In Shakespeare may be seen the same development. A progress from more to less rhyme is a sure index to his growth as a dramatist and a master of expression. In the early *Love's Labour's Lost* are more than 500 rhyming five-stress iambic couplets; in the very late *The Winter's Tale* there is not one.[1]

More than one third of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is in rhymed verse. This unusually large proportion of rhyme is due in great measure to the nature of the subject matter and the form of the play as a lyrical drama with much of the feeling and the character of a masque. "Shakespeare deliberately employs rhyme for certain definite purposes. It would be an error to conclude that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* preceded *The Comedy of Errors* because it contained a larger proportion of rhyming lines, until we had first decided whether special incentives to rhyme did not exist in the case of that comedy of Fairyland." — Dowden.

[1] The Chorus speech introducing Act IV is excepted as not part of the regular dialogue.

1. *Five-Stress Iambic Verse.* In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* five-stress iambic couplets abound in the regular dialogue and are used for the following among other purposes: (1) to give emotional pitch and intensity, I. i. 208–223, III. ii. 137–190; (2) to give the speeches of the fairies distinction and passion, III. i. 138–147; (3) to give epigrammatic effect to humorous passages, II. i. 44–57, III. ii. 16–34; and (4) to mark an exit or round off a speech, IV. i. 181–182, V. i. 21–22, 104–105. As in rhymed heroic verse, a triplet, III. ii. 159–161, is occasionally found among the couplets, and sometimes a quatrain bound by one rhyme, III. ii. 96–99, 139–142. In Titania's famous address to her attendant fairies, III. i. 151–160, the same rhyme is repeated ten times. "When we meet such a series of ten lines all rhyming together . . . we see that rhyme here is treated with the design of producing special effects." — Dowden. Alternate rhymes in five-stress verse are found only in Shakespeare's plays written before 1600, and about sixty occur in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In III. ii. 122–127, 128–133, 431–436, 442–447, the dialogue is arranged in the six-line stanza verse (rhyming *a b a b c c*) of *Venus and Adonis*.[1]

2. *Interlude Verse.* Most of the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' verse is five-stress iambic arranged either in couplets or in quatrains rhyming alternately. Most of the couplets are formally closed, giving the peculiarly archaic and stiltedly artificial effect, which, as in the case of the 'Mouse-trap' couplets in *Hamlet*, differentiates the play within the play from the play itself. Occasionally six lines are rhymed

[1] Lodge's *Scillas Metamorphosis*, 1589, from which Shakespeare plainly drew inspiration for *Venus and Adonis*, is written in this verse.

together, and the result is humorously irresistible. The archaic-humorous effect is helped by the introduction of two-stress, V, i, 270–271, etc. (cf. Bottom's travesty, I, ii, 25–32), and three-stress, V, i, 272, 275, etc., iambic verse (see note, V, i, 270). In III, i, 83–86, is introduced a quatrain of six-stress iambic verse, with alternate rhymes. This six-stress verse, usually called Alexandrine,[1] was a favorite sixteenth century measure, and it was common in moral plays and the early heroic drama.[2] The burlesque effect of the lines declaimed by Flute must have been delightful to an Elizabethan audience.

3. *Trochaic Verse.* Shakespeare's theory of the technique of verse and his sense of the appropriateness of certain rhythms to the expression of certain moods and emotions may be read in the interesting fact that he makes his supernatural beings so often express themselves in trochaic verse, with a marked preference for four-stress (tetrameter) effects. Whenever Puck, or Oberon, or one of the fairies, utters what may be construed as a spell or enchantment,[3] he speaks, like the witches in *Macbeth*, in four-stress trochaic verse. A notable exception is the charm uttered by Puck at the close of the third act (see below, *Doggerel*). In Shakespeare's hands the measure is saved from monotony by the predominance of catalectic lines, and by the introduction of catalectic effects after the second and the fourth stresses, II, i, 2–5 (cf. Guest's

[1] While French prosodists apply the term Alexandrine only to a twelve-syllable line with the pause after the sixth syllable, it is generally used in English to designate iambic six-stress verse, or iambic hexameter. Cf. note, II, i, 248.

[2] Cf. *Wit and Science*, *Kynge Johan*, etc., in Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, or Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakspercan Drama*.

[3] The casket rhymes in *The Merchant of Venice*, which are of the nature of spells, are in trochaic tetrameter catalectic.

criticism, quoted in note), and of couplets containing one line iambic and the other trochaic, II, ii, 74–75.[1]

4. *Songs.* The lyric[2] sung by the fairies to lull Titania to sleep, "You spotted snakes with double tongue," II, ii, 9, is in four-stress trochaic rhythm catalectic. The opening line may be read as iambic, but it is really trochaic with an extra unstressed syllable at the beginning.

The norm of Bottom's snatch of song, "The ousel-cock so black of hue," III, i, 114, is the ballad stanza[3] of four-stress iambic verse alternating with three-stress.

5. *Doggerel.* In the earliest comedies, such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Comedy of Errors*, doggerel lines abound in the speeches of the comic characters. The only line of doggerel in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that of seven stresses at the close of the fantastic charm which Puck utters as he squeezes the love-juice on Lysander's eye, III, ii, 448–463. This charm begins with an anapæstic monometer, and through trochaic tetrameters, iambic tetrameters, and dactylic rhythms, swings into the septenary[4] of doggerel with which the charm closes and the act ends.

[1] "Both lines are trochaic, but in one there is an extra syllable at the beginning, as well as at the end." — Abbott.

[2] *The New Shakspere Society* records eight musical settings.

[3] The regular measure of the old ballads seems to have been originally four-stress throughout, with a tendency to drop the last stress in the alternating lines. The development of this tendency gives the measure of the *Robin Hood* ballads, etc., and the common metre of modern hymns.

[4] The septenary, as seven-stress verse, was as common as Alexandrine verse in moral plays and the early heroic drama. The two in combination made 'poulter's measure,' — "the commonest sort of verse which we use nowada[illegible] viz. the long verse of twelve and fourtene sillables)." — Gascoigne (1575).

Blank Verse

About a third of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is in blank verse — the unrhymed, iambic five-stress (decasyllabic) verse, or iambic pentameter, introduced into England from Italy by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, about 1540, and used by him in a translation of the second and fourth books of Vergil's *Æneid*. Nicholas Grimald (*Tottel's Miscellany*, 1557) employed the measure for the first time in English original poetry, and its roots began to strike deep into British soil and absorb substance. It is peculiarly significant that Sackville and Norton should have used it as the measure of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy (performed by "the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple" on January 18, 1561, and first printed in 1565). About the time when Shakespeare arrived in London the infinite possibilities of blank verse as a vehicle for dramatic poetry and passion were being shown by Kyd, and above all by Marlowe. Blank verse as used by Shakespeare is really an epitome of the development of the measure in connection with the English drama. In his earlier plays the blank verse is often similar to that of *Gorboduc*. The tendency is to adhere to the syllable-counting principle, to make the line the unit, the sentence and phrase coinciding with the line (end-stopped verse), and to use five perfect iambic feet to the line. In plays of the middle period, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*, written between 1596 and 1600, the blank verse is more like that of Kyd and Marlowe, with less monotonous regularity in the structure and an increasing tendency to carry on the sense from one line to another without a syntactical or rhetorical pause at the end of the line (run-on verse, *enjambement*).

Redundant syllables now abound, and the melody is richer and fuller. In Shakespeare's later plays the blank verse breaks away from bondage to formal line limits, and sweeps all along with it in freedom, power, and organic unity.

Few stress modifications occur in the 742 lines of blank verse in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The verse is on the whole regular, and as such tends to be monotonous. There are only 29 feminine (double) endings, no light endings, and there is but one weak ending, and but one possible Alexandrine (see note, II, i, 248). There are 32 speech endings not coincident with line endings. Such variations as feminine endings, light endings, weak endings,[1] and mid-line speech endings, give to blank verse flexibility and power in addition to music and harmony, and they are found most abundantly in Shakespeare's very latest plays. It is noteworthy that the stress modifications and rhythmic variations in the blank verse of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* occur in passages of unusual emotional appeal, as in III, ii, 195–244, or of rich wisdom and philosophic vision, as in V, i, 2–20, 89–103. These are among the passages which have often been regarded as alterations and additions of Shakespeare's maturity (see above, Date of Composition, Characteristics of Plot and Style), not primarily because of the verse characteristics, but because of the richness and fullness of the feeling and the thought. Here as elsewhere may be seen the organic unity of a poet's thought and its expression in

[1] Light endings, as defined by Ingram, are such words as *am*, *can*, *do*, *has*, *I*, *thou*, etc., on which "the voice can to a certain small extent dwell"; weak endings are words like *and*, *for*, *from*, *if*, *in*, *of*, *or*, which "are so essentially proclitic . . . that we are forced to run them, in pronunciation no less [illegible] in sense, into the closest connection with the opening words of the succeeding line."

verse. "For of the soule the bodie forme doth take."[1] A poetic thought is a thing so humorsome and so passionate that it disdains a dwelling whose architecture is not to its taste, and the arrangements of which are ill adapted to its comfort.[2]

Prose

In the development of the English drama the use of prose as a vehicle of expression entitled to equal rights with verse was due to Lyly. He was the first to use prose with power and distinction in original plays, and did memorable service in preparing the way for Shakespeare's achievement. Interesting attempts have been made to explain Shakespeare's distinctive use of verse and prose; and of recent years there has been much discussion of the question "whether we are justified in supposing that Shakespeare was guided by any fixed principle in his employment of verse and prose, or whether he merely employed them, as fancy suggested, for the sake of variety and relief."[3] It is a significant fact that in many of his earlier plays there is little or no prose, and that the proportion of prose to blank verse increases with the decrease of rhyme. Five kinds of prose may be distinguished in the plays: (1) The prose of formal documents, as in letters and proclamations. (2) The prose of 'low life'

[1] Spenser, *An Hymne in Honour of Beautie*. Cf. Emerson's "Every spirit makes its house, and we can give a shrewd guess from the house to its inhabitant."

[2] See Hiram Corson, *An Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare*, pp. 51–82.

[3] Churton Collins, *Shakespeare as a Prose Writer*. See Delius, *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen* (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, V, 227–273); Janssen, *Die Prosa in Shakespeares Dramen*; Hiram Corson, *An Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare*, pp. 83–98.

and the speech of comic characters. This is a development of the humorous prose found, for example, in Greene's comedies that deal with humble life. (3) The colloquial prose of dialogue. Shakespeare was "the creator of colloquial prose, of the prose most appropriate for drama." — Churton Collins. (4) The prose of abnormal mentality. (5) Impassioned or highly wrought poetical and rhetorical prose. Of these kinds of prose the second and the third are conspicuous in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: the second in all the scenes where Bottom and the "crew of patches" appear and discuss their play, the prose here furnishing an admirable background for the stilted heroic verse of the interlude; and the third in the comments of Theseus, Hippolyta, and Demetrius during the performance of the interlude, the prose diction giving temporary emotional relief and preparing for the heightening of the dramatic pitch in the scenes which immediately follow.

V. SCENE OF ACTION[1]

The scene-setting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is singularly symmetrical. The first scene is the palace of Theseus; the second is the cottage of the village carpenter, Quince. Then come five scenes in the wood, which, though haunted of fairies, is drenched in 'local color' and Stratford atmosphere, with the flora and the fauna of the Warwickshire groves. The woodland scenes are followed, as they are preceded, by a scene laid at Quince's cottage. The last scene, like the first, is the palace of Theseus. The simplicity and the beauty of this scene-setting make the play suitable for amateur presentation and out-of-door performance.

[1] See also xlix–l, The Characters.

VI. DURATION OF ACTION

At the beginning of the play Theseus plainly indicates that the action is to cover "four happy days," I, i, 2, a statement emphasized by Hippolyta in her opening speech, I, i, 7 ff. Not "to consider too curiously,"[1] the duration of the action is three consecutive days; it closes when "the iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve," V, i, 355, on the night of May-day. The formal time scheme is:

Day 1 (April 29). — I.
Day 2 (April 30). — II; III; IV, i, 1–135.
Day 3 (May 1). — IV, i, 136–213; V.

There are inconsistencies also for those who care to find them in the references to the moon and the dawn. But let the difference between a poet's point of view and a scientist's never be lost sight of in analyzing a work of creative imagination. Shakespeare's time and space allusions, like Sir Walter Scott's, are independent of chronometers and almanacs. As Orlando said to Rosalind, "There 's no clock in the forest!"

VII. TITLE OF THE PLAY[2]

As the action of the play falls within April 29 and May 1, the title of the play must not be construed literally,

[1] A defence of the "four happy days," considered "curiously" and very humorously, has been made by Furness. See *Variorum*, Preface (March, 1895), xxvii–xxxiv. The key to the solution of the "apparent inconsistency" is found by Fleay in the Folio stage direction, quoted in the textual note, III, ii, 463.

[2] See also xlviii–xlix, The Characters.

Midsummer Day, one of the recognized 'quarter-days' in England, falling on June 24, the festival of St. John.[1]

This was a time when plays, pageants, and rural dramatic performances called "midsummer sights" were often given, and Malone and others have suggested that the title implies that the play was designed for representation on Midsummer Night. But the explanation of the title may be found in the old idea that fairies, witches, and spirits had potent sway on Midsummer Eve.[2] In discussing Dr. Johnson's famous words, "I know not why Shakespeare calls this play 'A *Midsummer* Night's Dream,' when he so carefully informs us that it happened on the night preceding *May* day," Dr. Furness has the following paragraph of beauty and imaginative vision:

> The discrepancy noted by Dr. Johnson can be, I think, explained by recalling the distinction, always in the main preserved in England, between festivities and rites attending the May-day celebrations and those of the twenty-fourth of June: the former were allotted to the day-time and the latter to the night-time. As the wedding sports of Theseus, with hounds and horns and Interludes, were to take place by daylight, May-day was the fit time for them; as the cross purposes of the lovers were to be made straight with fairy charms during slumber, night was chosen for them, and both day and night were woven together, and one potent glamour floated over all in the shadowy realm of a midsummer night's dream.

[1] "It was to the summer solstice what Christmas still is to the winter. The words of *Luke*, i, 14, that many should rejoice at the birth of St. John, found a literal fulfilment." — Verity.

[2] Cf. the traditions connected with the eve of Allhallows or All Saints (Halloween). The expression 'midsummer madness,' *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 61, has reference probably not to this but to the old idea that hot weather affected the brain. "'T is midsummer moon with you" is a proverb in Ray's *Collection*, signifying 'You are mad.'

VIII. DRAMATIC CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

As a drama *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an excellent bit of constructive art, symmetrical in form and compact of plot; in this respect it shows a marked advance upon the art shown in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Comedy of Errors*. Like that of *The Tempest* the action of this play has enchantment as its motive, a motive that primarily is more poetic than dramatic, but the three actions — that of the Athenian Lovers, that of the Fairies, and that of the Clowns — are so interwoven that the result is as dramatically effective as it is satisfying to the imagination and the instinct for beauty. The fact that one interpreter finds the real centre of the plot in the love-story of the four Athenians, that another declares that the action of Oberon, Titania, and Puck is the main action, that a third finds Theseus the central figure of the play, and that a fourth feels that the interest of the play as a play turns upon the dramatic power in the delineation of the manners and humors of the "rude mechanicals," is only cumulative testimony to the splendid balance of the play as a whole. Each plot-action has a beginning, a middle, and an end in itself, and each interpreter's judgment will depend upon the point of view taken and the vividness of the appeal made. The nuptials of Theseus and Hippolyta constitute what R. G. Moulton has well called the "enveloping action"; the love-story of the four Athenians gives "the entanglement of perverse intrigue" which supplies the rising action of the comedy. Very unconsciously the artisans, whose realistic stupidities and buffooneries excite wholesome laughter at every turn they take and every word they utter, and very consciously

the fairies, who are the dainty instruments of the enchantment, aid and abet the complication of the plot as they aid and abet its resolution.

Like tragedy, comedy deals with a conflict between an individual force (which may be centered either in one character, or in a group of characters acting as one) and environing circumstances. In tragedy the individual (one person or a group) is overwhelmed; in comedy the individual triumphs. In comedy, as in tragedy, there are five stages in the plot development: (1) the exposition, or introduction; (2) the complication, rising action, or growth; (3) the climax, crisis, or turning point; (4) the resolution, falling action, or consequence; and (5) the dénouement, catastrophe,[1] or conclusion. Let it not be thought for a moment that each of these stages is clearly differentiated. As a rule they pass insensibly into each other, as they do in life. Especially is this true in a play like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the weaving of the various plot-actions is so close and compact.

Analysis by Act and Scene[2]

I. The Exposition, or Introduction (of the Nature of a Prologue)

Act I, Scene i. Theseus, about to celebrate his marriage to Hippolyta, gives orders to Philostrate to have dramatic festivities for the

[1] "*Catastrophe* — the change or revolution which produces the conclusion or final event of a dramatic piece." — Johnson.

[2] "It must be understood that a play can be analyzed into very different schemes of plot. It must not be thought that one of these schemes is right and the rest wrong; but the schemes will be better or worse in proportion as — while of course representing correctly the facts of the play — they bring out more or less of what ministers to our sense of design." — Moulton

event. Egeus and the Athenian lovers are introduced, and their story is unfolded. Helena is in love with Demetrius, who loves Hermia; Hermia loves Lysander, who loves her, but her father, Egeus, wishes her to marry Demetrius, who has already made love to her friend, Helena. With the determination of Hermia and Lysander to fly from Athens, and of Helena to warn Demetrius of the flight and lure him to accompany her to the wood, the complication is fully foreshadowed.

Act I, Scene ii. Bottom and the crew of patches are introduced. They are preparing a play, an interlude, to be given "before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night." So this subaction is linked on the orders given to Philostrate by Theseus, I, i, 11–19.

Act II, Scene i, 1–184. The fairies are introduced, and the quarrel between Oberon and Titania over the "little changeling boy" is described. Oberon orders Puck to bring him the flower called love-in-idleness and its magic liquor he will lay on Titania's sleeping eyelids.

II. The Complication, Rising Action, or Growth

Act II, Scene i, 185–265. The story of the lovers is connected with that of the fairies. Oberon overhears Demetrius scorning the fond Helena; and, sympathizing with her, he instructs Puck to anoint the eyes of the disdainful youth with the love-juice.

Act II, Scene ii. Oberon finds Titania asleep and squeezes the flower on her eyelids. Puck finds Hermia and Lysander asleep from weariness, and thinking Lysander to be Demetrius anoints his eyes. Demetrius and Helena then enter, and Lysander awaking falls madly in love with Helena.

Act III, Scene i. The rehearsal of the interlude by the crew of patches. Bottom's 'translation.' Titania awaking sees him, crowned as he is with the ass's head, and dotes on him in her extremity.

Act III, Scene ii, 1–121. The complication is at its height when the eyes of Demetrius are anointed and Helena is brought before him as he wakes.

III. The Climax, Crisis, or Turning Point[1]

Act III. Scene ... 122–447. The quarreling of the lovers, whose original relations to one another are now so completely reversed, the challenges of the men and the recriminations of the women, make an effective climax. Worn out and spellbound all fall asleep.

IV. The Resolution, Falling Action, or Consequence

Act III. Scene ii. 448–463. The beginning of the resolution is usually in the closest union with the climax, and the application of the juice to Lysander's eyes anticipates the end of the troubles of the lovers.

Act IV, Scene i. Oberon, having obtained Titania's page, awakes her from her infatuation for Bottom, and the fairy king and queen are reconciled. The human lovers are also readjusted and reconciled. Oberon orders Puck to remove the ass's head from Bottom, who, awaking from what he calls a "most rare vision," utters the significant words, "man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream!"

Act IV, Scene ii. "Sweet bully Bottom" is restored to his fellows, and the patches make final arrangements for the performance of the interlude at the marriage festival.

V. The Dénouement, Catastrophe, or Conclusion (of the Nature of an Epilogue)

Act V, Scene i. Theseus and Hippolyta reappear, and "the lovers, full of joy and mirth," come in. The artisans perform the interlude before the court. After "the iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve," the fairies come and invoke blessings on the bridal-bed.

[1] Many interpreters and students of dramatic technique find the 'turning point' in Puck's spell, uttered as he squeezes the juice on Lysander's eye, III, ii, 448–463.

IX. THE CHARACTERS

The Fairies

Though Chaucer and others had spoken about the fairy nation, it was for Shakespeare to let them speak for themselves: until he clothed their life in apt forms, their thoughts in fitting words, they but floated unseen and unheard in the air and thought of old England. On this point there need be no scruple about receiving Hallam's statement of the matter: "*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet, — the fairy machinery. A few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner with popular superstitions; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood, and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals' among the personages of the drama." How much Shakespeare did as the friend and saviour of those sweet airy frolickers of the past from the relentless mowings of time, has been charmingly set forth in Hood's *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*.

What, then, are the leading qualities which Shakespeare ascribes to these ideal or fanciful beings? Coleridge says he is "convinced that Shakespeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout." This remark no doubt rightly hits the true genius of the piece; and on no other ground can its merits be duly estimated. The whole play is indeed a sort of ideal dream; and it is from the fairy personages that its

character as such mainly proceeds. All the materials of the piece are ordered and assimilated to that central and governing idea. This it is that explains and justifies the distinctive features of the work, such as the constant preponderance of the lyrical over the dramatic, and the free playing of the action unchecked by the conditions of outward fact and reality. Accordingly a sort of lawlessness is, as it ought to be, the very law of the performance. King Oberon is the sovereign who presides over the world of dreams; Puck is his prime minister: and all the other denizens of Fairydom are his subjects and the agents of his will in this capacity. Titania's nature and functions are precisely the same which Mercutio assigns to Queen Mab, whom he aptly describes as having for her office to deliver sleeping men's fancies of their dreams, those "children of an idle brain." In keeping with this central dream-idea, the actual order of things everywhere gives place to the spontaneous issues and capricious turnings of the dreaming mind: the lofty and the low, the beautiful and the grotesque, the world of fancy and of fact, all the strange diversities that enter into "such stuff as dreams are made on" running and frisking together, and interchanging their functions and properties; so that the whole seems confused, flitting, shadowy, and indistinct, as fading away in the remoteness and fascination of moonlight. The very scene is laid in a veritable dreamland, called Athens indeed, but only because Athens was the greatest beehive of beautiful visions then known, or rather it is laid in an ideal forest near an ideal Athens, — a forest peopled with sportive elves and sprites and fairies feeding on moonlight and music and fragrance; a place where nature herself is preternatural; where everything is idealized, even to the sunbeams and the

soil; where the vegetation proceeds by enchantment, and there is magic in the germination of the seed and secretion of the sap.

The characteristic attributes of the fairy people are, perhaps, most availably represented in Puck: who is apt to remind one of Ariel, though the two have little in common, save that both are preternatural, and therefore live no longer in the faith of reason. Puck is no such sweet-mannered, tender-hearted, music-breathing spirit as Prospero's delicate prime minister; there are no such fine interweavings of a sensitive moral soul in his nature, he has no such soft touches of compassion and pious awe of goodness as link the dainty Ariel in so smoothly with our best sympathies. Though Goodfellow by name, his powers and aptitudes for mischief are quite unchecked by any gentle relentings of fellow-feeling; in whatever distress he finds or occasions he sees much to laugh at, nothing to pity; to tease and vex poor human sufferers, and then to think "what fools these mortals be," is pure fun to him. Yet, notwithstanding his mad pranks, we cannot choose but love the little sinner, and let our fancy frolic with him, his sense of the ludicrous is so exquisite, he is so fond of sport, and so quaint and merry in his mischief; while at the same time such is the strange web of his nature as to keep him morally innocent. In all which I think he answers perfectly to the best idea we can frame of what a little dream-god should be.

In further explication of this peculiar people, it is to be noted that there is nothing of reflection or conscience or even of a spiritualized intelligence in their proper life: they have all the attributes of the merely natural and sensitive soul, but no attributes of the properly rational and moral soul.

They worship the clean, the neat, the pretty, and the pleasant, — whatever goes to make up the idea of purely sensuous beauty. This is a sort of religion with them; whatever of conscience they have adheres to this; so that herein they not unfitly represent the wholesome old notion which places cleanliness next to godliness. Everything that is trim, dainty, elegant, graceful, agreeable, and sweet to the senses, they delight in. Flowers, fragrances, dewdrops, and moonbeams, honeybees, butterflies, and nightingales, dancing, play, and song, — these are their joy: out of these they weave their highest delectation; amid these they "fleet the time carelessly," without memory or forecast, and with no thought or aim beyond the passing pleasure of the moment. On the other hand, they have an instinctive repugnance to whatever is foul, ugly, sluttish, awkward, ungainly, or misshapen; they wage unrelenting war against bats, spiders, hedgehogs, spotted snakes, blindworms, long-legg'd spinners, beetles, and all such disagreeable creatures; to "kill cankers in the musk-rosebuds," and to "keep back the clamorous owl," are regular parts of their business. Their intense dislike of what is ugly and misshapen is the reason why they so much practice "the legerdemain of changelings," stealing away finished, handsome babies, and leaving blemished and defective ones in their stead. For the same cause they love to pester and persecute and play shrewd tricks upon decrepit old age, wise aunts, and toothless, chattering gossips, and especially such awkward "hempen home-spuns" as Bottom and his fellow-actors in the interlude.

Thus these beings embody the ideal of the mere natural soul, or rather the purely sensuous fancy which shapes and governs the pleasing or the vexing delusions of sleep. They

lead a merry, luxurious life, given up entirely to the pleasures of happy sensation, — a happiness that has no moral element, nothing of reason or conscience in it. They are indeed a sort of personified dreams; and so Shakespeare places them in a kindly or at least harmless relation to mortals as the bringers of dreams. Their very kingdom is located in the aromatic, flower-scented Indies, a land where mortals are supposed to live in a half-dreamy state. Thence they come, "following darkness," just as dreams naturally do; or, as Oberon words it:

> Trip we after the night's shade;
> We the globe can compass soon,
> Swifter than the wandering moon. [IV, i, 93–95.]

It is their nature to shun the daylight, though they do not fear it, and to prefer the dark, as this is their appropriate worktime; but most of all they love the dusk and the twilight, because this is the best dreaming-time, whether the dreamer be asleep or awake. And all the shifting phantom-jugglery of dreams, all the sweet soothing witcheries, and all the teasing and tantalizing imagery of dreamland, rightly belong to their province.

It is a very noteworthy point that all their power or influence over the hearts and actions of mortals works through the medium of dreams, or of such fancies as are most allied to dreams. So that their whole inner character is fashioned in harmony with their external function. Nor is it without rare felicity that Shakespeare assigns to them the dominion over the workings of sensuous and superficial love, this being but as one of the courts of the dreamland kingdom; a region ordered, as it were, quite apart from the proper regards of duty and law, and where the natural soul of man

moves free of moral thought and responsibility. Accordingly we have the king of the fairies endowed with the rights and powers both of the classical god of love and the classical goddess of chastity. Oberon commands alike the secret virtues of "Dian's bud" and of "Cupid's flower"; and he seems to use them both unchecked by any other law than his innate love of what is handsome and fair, and his native aversion to what is ugly and foul; that is, he owns no restraint but as he is inwardly held to apply either or both of them in such a way as to avoid all distortion or perversion from what is naturally graceful and pleasant. For everybody knows that in the intoxications of a life of sensuous love reason and conscience have as little force as they have in a life of dreams. And so Shakespeare fitly ascribes to Oberon and his ministers both Cupid's delight in frivolous breaches of faith and Jove's laughter at lovers' perjuries; and this on the ground, apparently, that the doings of those in Cupid's power are as harmless and unaccountable as the freaks of a dream.

In pursuance of this idea he depicts the fairies as beings without any proper moral sense in what they do, but as having a very keen sense of what is ludicrous and absurd in the doings of men. They are careless and unscrupulous in their dealings in this behalf. The wayward follies and the teasing perplexities of the fancy-smitten persons are pure sport to them. If by their wanton mistakes they can bewilder and provoke the lovers into larger outcomes of the laughable, so much the higher runs their mirth. And as they have no fellow-feeling with the pains of those who thus feed their love of fun, so the effect of their roguish tricks makes no impression upon them; they have a feeling of simple delight

and wonder at the harmless frettings and fumings which their merry mischief has a hand in bringing to pass: but then it is to be observed also, that they find just as much sport in tricking the poor lover out of his vexations as in tricking him into them; in fact, they never rest satisfied with the fun of the former so long as there is any chance of enjoying that of the latter also.

The Human Mortals

Any very firm or strong delineation of character, any deep passion, earnest purpose, or working of powerful motives, would clearly go at odds with the spirit of such a performance as this play is. It has room but for love and beauty and delight, for whatever is most poetical in nature and fancy, and for such tranquil stirrings of thought and feeling as may flow out in musical expression. Any such tuggings of mind or heart as would ruffle and discompose the smoothness of lyrical division would be quite out of keeping in a course of dream-life. The characters here, accordingly, are drawn with light, delicate, vanishing touches; some of them being dreamy and sentimental, some gay and frolicsome, and others replete with amusing absurdities, while all are alike dipped in fancy or sprinkled with humor. And for the same reason the tender distresses of unrequited or forsaken love here touch not our moral sense at all, but only at the most our human sympathies: love itself being represented as but the effect of some visual enchantment, which the king of the fairies can inspire, suspend, or reverse at pleasure. Even the heroic personages are fitly shown in an unheroic aspect. We see them but in their unbendings, when

they have daffed their martial robes aside, to lead the train of day-dreamers and have a nuptial jubilee.

So, likewise, in the transformation of Bottom and the dotage of Titania, all the resources of fancy were needed, to prevent the unpoetical from getting the upper hand, and thus swamping the genius of the piece. As it is, what words can fitly express the effect with which the extremes of the grotesque and the beautiful are here brought together? What an inward quiet laughter springs up and lubricates the fancy at Bottom's droll confusion of his two natures, when he talks, now as an ass, now as a man, and anon as a mixture of both: his thoughts running at the same time on honey-bags and thistles, the charms of music and of good dry oats! Who but Shakespeare or nature could have so interfused the lyrical spirit, not only with, but into and through a series or cluster of the most irregular and fantastic drolleries. But indeed this embracing and kissing of the most ludicrous and the most poetical, the enchantment under which they meet, and the airy, dream-like grace that hovers over their union, are altogether inimitable and indescribable. In this singular wedlock, the very diversity of the elements seems to link them the closer, while this linking in turn heightens that diversity: Titania being thereby drawn on to finer issues of soul, and Bottom to larger expressions of stomach. The union is so very improbable as to seem quite natural; we cannot conceive how anything but a dream could possibly have married things so contrary; and that they could not have come together save in a dream, is a sort of proof that they *were* dreamed together.

And so, throughout, the execution is in strict accordance with the plan. The play, from beginning to end, is a perfect

festival of whatever dainties and delicacies poetry may command, — a continued revelry and jollification of soul, where the understanding is lulled asleep, that the fancy may run riot in unrestrained enjoyment. The bringing together of four parts so dissimilar as those of the duke and his warrior bride, of the Athenian ladies and their lovers, of the amateur players and their woodland rehearsal, and of the fairy bickerings and overreaching: and the carrying of them severally to a point where they all meet and blend in lyrical respondence, — all this is done in the same freedom from the laws that govern the drama of character and life. Each group of persons is made to parody itself into concert with the others: while the frequent intershootings of fairy influence lift the whole into the softest regions of fancy. At last the interlude comes in as an amusing burlesque on all that has gone before; as at the close of troubled dreams we sometimes dream that we have been dreaming, and our perturbations sink to rest in the sweet assurance that they were but the phantoms and unrealities of a busy sleep.

Theseus

Though in the case of Theseus the characterization is quite secondary and subordinate, the play probably has as much of character as is compatible with so much of poetry. Theseus has been well described as a classic personage with romantic features and expression. The name is Greek, but the nature and spirit are essentially Gothic. Nor does the abundance of classical allusion and imagery in the story call for any qualification here; because whatsoever is taken is thoroughly steeped in the efficacy of the taker. This sort of anachronism, common to all modern writers

before and during the age of Shakespeare, seems to have arisen in part from a comparative dearth of classical learning, which left men to contemplate the heroes of antiquity under the forms into which their own mind and manners had been cast. Thus their delineations became informed with the genius of romance: the condensed grace of ancient character giving way to the enlargement of chivalrous magnanimity and honor, with its "high-erected thoughts seated in the heart of courtesy." Such in Shakespeare's case appears to have been the no less beautiful than natural result of the "small learning," so often smiled, and sometimes barked, at by those more skilled in the ancient languages than in the mother-tongue of nature.

The Lovers

In the two pairs of lovers there are hardly any lines deep and firm enough to be rightly called characteristic. Their doings, even more than those of the other human persons, are marked by the dream-like freakishness and whimsicality which distinguish the piece. Perhaps the two ladies are slightly discriminated as individuals, in that Hermia, besides her brevity of person, is the more tart in temper, and the more pert and shrewish of speech, while Helena is of a milder and softer disposition, with less of confidence in herself. So too in the case of Demetrius and Lysander the lines of individuality are exceedingly faint; the former being perhaps a shade the more caustic and spiteful, and the latter somewhat the more open and candid. But there is really nothing of heart or soul in what any of them do. As we see them, they are not actuated by principle at all, or even by anything striking so deep as motive; their conduct

issues from the more superficial springs of capricious impulse and fancy, the "jugglery of the senses during the sleep of reason"; the higher forces of a mental and moral bearing having no hand in shaping their action. For the fairy influences do not reach so far as to the proper seat of motive and principle: they have but the skin-depth of amorous caprice; all the elements of character and all the vital springs of faith and loyalty and honor lying quite beyond their sphere. Even here the judgment or the genius of the poet is very perceptible; the lovers being represented from the start as acting from no forces or inspirations too deep or strong for the powers of Fairyland to overcome. Thus the pre-condition of the two pairs in their whim-bewilderment is duly attempered to the purposed dream-play of the general action. Nor is the seeming stanchness of Hermia and Demetrius in the outset any exception to this view; for nothing is more willful and obstinate than amorous caprice or skin-deep love during its brief tenure of the fancy.

Bottom the Weaver

Of all the characters in this play, Bottom descends by far the most into the realities of common experience, and is therefore much the most accessible to the grasp of prosaic and critical fingers. It has been thought that the poet meant him as a satire on the envies and jealousies of the greenroom, as they had fallen under his keen yet kindly eye. But, surely, the qualities uppermost in Bottom the Weaver had forced themselves on his notice long before he entered the greenroom. It is indeed curious to observe the solicitude of this protean actor and critic that all the parts of the forthcoming play may have the benefit of his execution;

how great is his concern lest, if he be tied to one, the others may be "overdone or come tardy off"; and how he would fain engross them all to himself, to the end of course that all may succeed, to the honor of the stage and the pleasure of the spectators. But Bottom's metamorphosis is the most potent drawer-out of his genius. The sense of his new headdress stirs up all the manhood within him, and lifts his character into ludicrous greatness at once. Hitherto the seeming to be a man has made him content to be little better than an ass: but no sooner is he conscious of seeming an ass than he tries his best to be a man; while all his efforts that way only go to approve the fitness of his present seeming to his former being.

Schlegel happily remarks that "the droll wonder of Bottom's metamorphosis is merely the translation of a metaphor in its literal sense." The turning of a figure of speech thus into visible form is a thing only to be thought of or imagined; so that probably no attempt to paint or represent it to the senses can ever succeed. We can bear — at least we often have to bear — that a man should seem an ass to the mind's eye; but that he should seem such to the eye of the body is rather too much, save as it is done in those fable-pictures which have long been among the playthings of the nursery. So a child, for instance, takes great pleasure in fancying the stick he is riding to be a horse, when he would be frightened out of his wits, were the stick to quicken and expand into an actual horse. In like manner we often delight in indulging fancies and giving names, when we should be shocked were our fancies to harden into facts. We enjoy visions in our sleep that would only disgust or terrify us should we awake and find them solidified into

things. The effect of Bottom's transformation can hardly be much otherwise, if set forth in visible, animated shape. Delightful to think of, it is scarce tolerable to look upon: exquisitely true in idea, it has no truth, or even verisimilitude, when reduced to fact: so that, however gladly imagination receives it, sense and understanding revolt at it.

X. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Literature has nothing else really like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It is perhaps the most original conception in the world of poetry. Here Shakespeare has exercised powers apparently differing even in kind, not only from those of any other writer, but from those displayed in any other of his own writings. Elsewhere, if his characters are penetrated with the ideal, their whereabout lies in the actual, and the work may in some measure be judged by that life which it claims to represent. Here the whereabout is as ideal as the characters; all is in the land of dreams, — a place for dreamers, not for critics. For who can tell what a dream ought or ought not to be, or when the natural conditions of dream-life are or are not rightly observed? How can the laws of time and space, as involved in the development of human character, — how can these be applied in a place where the mind is thus absolved from their proper jurisdiction? Besides, the whole thing swarms with enchantment. All the sweet witchery of Shakespeare's sweet genius is concentrated in it, yet disposed with so subtle and cunning a hand, that we can as little grasp it as get away from it; its charms, like those of a summer evening, are such as we may see and feel, but cannot locate or define; cannot say they are here, or they

are there. The moment we yield ourselves up to them, they seem to be everywhere: the moment we go to master them, they seem to be nowhere.

XI. STAGE HISTORY

The title-pages of both the First Quarto (Fisher's) and the Second (Roberts's), published in 1600 (see above, Early Editions), attest that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had been "sundry times publicly acted" by the "Lord Chamberlain his servants," that is, by the company to which Shakespeare himself belonged. This and the fact that two editions of the play were issued in that year indicate its popularity in the first years of its existence.

The Seventeenth Century[1]

The popularity of the play continued during the seventeenth century, public appreciation fastening chiefly upon the fairy plot and the clowns' burlesque. Imitations of both for dramatic representation are found early in the century. In 1602 *Narcissus, a Twelfth Night Merriment*, was produced by the students of St. John's College, Oxford, and a personified Well[2] in imitation of Pyramus and Thisbe's Wall seems to have been one of the hits. In 1611 Ben Jonson produced *The Masque of Oberon the Fairy Prince*, and twenty-three years later introduced a 'Dance of Mechanics,' obviously

[1] The quotations from seventeenth century writers are taken, with two exceptions, from C. M. Ingleby, *A Centurie of Prayse*, 1879.

[2] "'Enter one with a buckett and boughes and grasse,' who, after making his speech and arranging his locality, *exit*, leaving the bucket to represent him as *pars pro toto*." — A. W. Ward.

suggested by Bottom and his fellows, in his *Love's Welcome, the King and Queen's Entertainment at Bolsover*. A direct reference to Shakespeare's play is in the following extract from John Gee's *New Shreds of the old Snare*, printed in 1624: "As for flashes of light, we might see very cheape in the Comedie of *Pirrmus and Thisbe*, where one comes in with a Lanthorne and Acts *Mooneshine*." Taylor, the Water Poet, writing in 1630, thus alludes to the play, the allusion clearly indicating its popularity: "I say as it is applausefully written and commended to posterity in the Midsummer nights dreame. If we offend, it is with our good will, we came with no intent, but to offend, and shew our simple skill." The character of Bottom is probably alluded to in the following decree[1] (seemingly burlesque) made by Commissary-general John Spencer, with reference to the performance of a play at the house of Dr. John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, on Sunday, September 27, 1631, an event which had scandalized the Puritans:

Likewise wee doe order, that Mr. Wilson, because hee was a speciall plotter and Contriver of this busines, and did in suche a brutishe manner acte the same with an Asses head, therefore hee shall uppon Tuisday next, from 6 of the Clocke in the Morning till sixe of the Clocke at night sitt in the Porters Lodge at my Lords Bishopps house with his feete in the stocks and Attyred with his Asse head, and a bottle of haye sett before him, and this superscripcion on his breast —

> Good people I have played the beast
> And brought ill things to passe
> I was a man, but thus have made
> Myselfe a Silly Asse.

[1] Preserved among the Laud papers, *Lambeth MS.*, 1030, article 5.

The fate of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* during the Protectorate, when the ordinance of the Long Parliament against stage plays closed the theatres, may be read in the following extract from the preface to Francis Kirkman's *The Wits, or Sport upon Sport*, published in 1673:

> When the publique Theatres were shut up, and the Actors forbidden to present us with any of their Tragedies, because we had enough of that in earnest, and Comedies, because the Vices of the Age were too lively and smartly represented; then all that we could divert ourselves with were these humours and pieces of Plays, which passing under the name of a merry conceited Fellow, called *Bottom the Weaver, Simpleton the Smith, John Swabber*, or some such Title, were only allowed us, and that but by stealth too, and under pretence of Rope-dancing, or the like.

These "humours and pieces of Plays" were known as 'drolls,' and the droll extracted from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was published in quarto, in 1661, with the following title: *The Merry conceited Humours of Bottom the Weaver, as it hath been often publikely acted by some of his Majesties Comedians, and lately privately presented by several apprentices for their harmless recreation, with great applause.*

In 1663 the Silesian poet, Andreas Gryphius, one of Germany's earliest dramatists, brought out *Absurda Comica, oder Herr Peter Squenz*,[1] *Schimpfspiel*,[2] probably founded on such a droll as *The Merry conceited Humours*, which English actors, who often visited Germany in the seventeenth century, may have had in their repertory.[3]

[1] Quince. [2] a pasquinade.

[3] The Nuremberg mathematician, Daniel Schwenter, is said by Tieck to have translated for the stage and brought out at Altdorf a version of the Bottom scenes [illegible] Shakespeare's play, but no copy of this is in existence.

After the Restoration the play in its entirety seems to have been produced again on the degenerate English stage of those days, but it must have been too ethereal and poetic a creation for that setting of time and place. Pepys undoubtedly spoke for the Restoration theatre-goers as well as for himself, when he entered in his *Diary*, under September 29, 1662: "To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play, that ever I saw in my life."

The Eighteenth Century

In 1692 London was treated to *The Fairy Queen, made into an Opera, from a Comedy of Mr. Shakespear's*, with music by Purcell and dances by Priest. Of this production Downes in his *Roscius Anglicanus* says naïvely, "The Court and Town were wonderfully satisfy'd with it; but the expences in setting it out being so great, the Company got very little by it." Genest in his account of the stage arrangements tells how in the fifth act Juno appeared in a machine, with peacocks spreading their tails and filling the middle of the theatre; afterwards the scene changed to a Chinese garden, in which a Chinese man and woman sang and six monkeys danced!

All through the eighteenth century the play was known on the stage only as a kind of ridotto-show in the fashion of the 1692 production, or "with Recitative and Airs after the present Italian mode." Garrick is said to have been responsible for a version in which the "rude mechanicals" were wholly omitted and over a score of up-to-date songs introduced. Another eighteenth century adaptation, that held the

stage from 1763 to 1777, was a kind of farce, in announcing which it was mentioned as a special recommendation that "Theseus and all the serious characters" had been left out!

The Nineteenth Century

Mutilated stage versions of the play, with operatic accompaniments, survived the beginnings of the Romantic Renaissance in England. On January 17, 1816, a version by Reynolds, in three acts, and with sixteen songs, was produced, prominent actors taking the leading parts. In the announcement of this production, the statement was made, "not acted 50 years." This seems to have been the last of such grotesque adaptations. The leaven of Romanticism was making itself felt. Wieland in Germany had revivified the fairies in his *Oberon*: Tieck had adapted the play in his *Sommernachtstraum*, and Mendelssohn's noble overture, composed in 1826, was given at a revival of the play under Tieck's direction at Berlin in 1827.

On October 15, 1856, a notable production of the play in its entirety, with Mendelssohn's music, and exquisite stage settings, took place under the direction of Charles Kean. Harley played Bottom; and Puck, "growing out of the ground on a toadstool," was acted by a child who afterwards, as Miss Ellen Terry, became identified with some of the most famous Shakespearian revivals of the nineteenth century.

AUTHORITIES

(With the more important abbreviations used in the notes)

Q_1 = First Quarto (Fisher's), 1600.
Q_2 = Second Quarto (Roberts's), 1600.
Qq = First and Second Quartos.
F_1 = First Folio, 1623.
F_2 = Second Folio, 1632.
F_3 = Third Folio, 1663, 1664.
F_4 = Fourth Folio, 1685.
Ff = all the seventeenth century Folios.
Rowe = Rowe's editions, 1709, 1714.
Pope = Pope's editions, 1723, 1728.
Theobald = Theobald's editions, 1733, 1740.
Hanmer = Hanmer's edition, 1744.
Johnson = Johnson's edition, 1765.
Capell = Capell's edition, 1768.
Malone = Malone's edition, 1790.
Steevens = Steevens's edition, 1793.
Globe = Globe edition (Clark and Wright), 1864.
Dyce = Dyce's (third) edition, 1875.
Clar = Clarendon Press edition (W. A. Wright), 1877.
Delius = Delius's (fifth) edition, 1882.
Camb = Cambridge (third) edition (W. A. Wright), 1891.
Furness = H. H. Furness's *New Variorum* edition, 1895.
Chambers = E. K. Chambers's Warwick edition.
Verity = A. W. Verity's Pitt Press edition.
Cuningham = Henry Cuningham's Arden edition, Methuen.
Herford = C. H. Herford's *The Eversley Shakespeare*.
Abbott = E. A. Abbott's *A Shakespearian Grammar*.
Cotgrave = Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, 1611.
Schmidt = Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*.
Skeat = Skeat's *An Etymological Dictionary*.
Murray = *A New English Dictionary* (*The Oxford Dictionary*).
Century = *The Century Dictionary*.
Scot = Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584.

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

Except in the case of Shakespeare's plays (see note) the literature dates refer to first publication

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE		BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
	BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	PLAYS		
1564	Birth. Baptism, April 26, Stratford-on-Avon	NOTE. The plays in the columns below are arranged in the probable, though purely conjectural, order of composition. Dates appended to plays are those of first publication. Where no date is given, the play was first published in the First Folio (1623). M signifies that the play was mentioned by Meres in the **Palladis Tamia** (1598)	**Quart livre de Pantagruel**	Michelangelo died. Calvin died. Marlowe born. Galileo born
1565	Father became alderman		Sackville and Norton's **Gorboduc** printed	Philip II of Spain gave his name to Philippine Islands
1566	Brother Gilbert born		Udall's **Roister Doister** printed?	Murder of Rizzio
1568	Father, as bailiff of Stratford, entertained Queen's and Earl of Worcester's actors		The Bishops Bible. La Taille's **Saülle Furieux**. R. Grafton's **Chronicle**	Mary of Scots a prisoner in England. Ascham died. Coverdale died. Netherlands War of Liberation
1572			Camoens' **Os Lusiadas** (The Lusiads)	Knox died. Massacre of St. Bartholomew
1573			Tasso's **Aminta**	Ben Jonson born? Donne born
1574	Brother Richard born		**Mirror for Magistrates** (third edition)	Earl of Leicester's players licensed
1575			**Gammer Gurton's Needle.** Golding's Ovid (complete)	Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth. Palissy lectured on Natural History
1576			**The Paradise of Dainty Devices.** Gascoigne's **Steel Glass**	"The Theatre" opened in Finsbury Fields, London, followed by "The Curtain." Hans Sachs died
1577	Father in financial difficulties		Holinshed's **Chronicle**	Drake sailed to circumnavigate globe

1579	Sister Ann died (aged eight)				Gosson's **School of Abuse.** North's Plutarch. Lyly's **Euphues** (pt. i). Spenser's **Shepherd's Calendar**	**Union of Utrecht.** Tasso put in confinement at Ferrara
1580	Brother Edmund born				Montaigne's **Essais** (first edition)	Brown founded Separatists. Camoens died
1581					Tasso's **Gerusalemme Liberata**	Dutch Declaration of Independence
1582	Married Anne Hathaway				The Rheims New Testament	Accademia della Crusca founded
1583	Daughter Susanna born				Garnier's **Les Juives**	Sir Humphrey Gilbert drowned
1584					Lyly's **Campaspe.** Peele's **Arraignment of Paris**	**William the Silent** assassinated. Ivan the Terrible died
1585	Twin children (Hamnet, Judith) born				Guarini's **Pastor Fido** (1590)	Ronsard died
1586	Probably went to London				Camden's **Britannia**	Sir Philip Sidney killed
1587					Hakluyt's **Four Voyages. Faustbuch** (Spiess, Frankfort)	**Execution of Mary of Scots**
1588					**Martin Marprelate: The Epistle**	Defeat of Spanish Armada
1589		COMEDIES	HISTORIES	TRAGEDIES	Puttenham's **Art of English Poesie**	Henry of Navarre, King of France. Palissy died in Bastille
1590		**Love's Labour's Lost** (M. 1598)			Marlowe's **Tamburlaine.** Spenser's **Faerie Queene,** I-III. Lodge's **Rosalynde.** Sidney's **Arcadia**	Battle of Ivry
1591		**Comedy of Errors** (M)	**1 Henry VI** **2 Henry VI**		Sidney's **Astrophel and Stella.** Harington's tr. of **Orlando Furioso**	Herrick born

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART (CONTINUED)

YEAR	SHAKESPEARE				BRITISH AND FOREIGN LITERATURE	HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
	BIOGRAPHY; POEMS	PLAYS (see note above)				
1592	Greene's attack in **Groatsworth of Wit**	**Two Gentlemen of Verona** (M)	**Richard III** (M, 1597). **3 Henry VI**	**Romeo and Juliet** (M, 1597)	Daniel's **Delia**. Lyly's **Gallathea** (Galatea)	Greene died. Montaigne died. London theatres closed through plague
1593	**Venus and Adonis** (seven editions, 1593–1602)		**King John** (M). **Richard II** (M, 1597)	**Titus Andronicus** (M, 1594)	Peele's **Edward I.** Barnes's **Sonnets**	Marlowe died. Herbert born
1594	**Lucrece** (five editions, 1594–1616)	**A Midsummer Night's Dream** (M, 1600)			Rinuccini's **Dafne. Satire Ménipée**	Palestrina ("Princeps Musicæ") died
1595	Valuable contemporary references to Shakespeare	**All 's Well that Ends Well. Taming of the Shrew**			Peele's **Old Wives' Tale.** Spenser's **Epithalamion**	Tasso died. Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to Guiana. Sir J. Hawkins died
1596	Son Hamnet died. Family applied for coat-of-arms		**1 Henry IV** (M, 1598). **2 Henry IV** (1600)		Drayton's **Mortimeriados. Faerie Queene,** Books IV–VI	Burbage built Blackfriar's Theatre. Descartes born. Sir F. Drake died
1597	Purchased New Place, Stratford	**Merry Wives of Windsor. Merchant of Venice** (M, 1600)			Bacon's **Essays** (first edition). Hall's **Virgidemiarum**	The Tyrone rebellion
1598	Shakespeare acted in Jonson's **Every Man in His Humour**	**Much Ado About Nothing** (1600)	**Henry V** (1600)		Meres's **Palladis Tamia.** Chapman's Homer (pt. 1). Lope de Vega's **Arcadia**	Peele died. Edict of Nantes
1599	Part proprietor of Globe Theatre. Coat-of-arms granted. **The Passionate Pilgrim**	**As You Like It**			Aleman's **Guzman de Alfarache.** Peele's **David and Bethsabe**	Spenser died. Globe Theatre built. Oliver Cromwell born
1600	Won a London lawsuit	**Twelfth Night**			**England's Helicon**	Calderon born. Bruno died

1601	Father died. **The Phœnix and Turtle**			Julius Cæsar	Jonson's **Poetaster**	The Essex plot. Rivalry between London adult and boy actors
1602	Purchased more Stratford real estate			Hamlet (1603)	Dekker's **Satiromastix**	Bodleian Library founded
1603	His company acted before the Queen	Troilus and Cressida (1609)			Jonson's **Sejanus**	Queen Elizabeth died. Millenary Petition
1604	Sued Rogers at Stratford	Measure for Measure		Othello	Marlowe's **Faustus** (1588–1589)	Hampton Court Conference
1605	Godfather to William D'Avenant			Macbeth	**Don Quixote** (pt. 1)	Gunpowder plot. Sir Thomas Browne born
1606	**King Lear** given before Court			King Lear (1608)	Chapman's **Monsieur D'Olive**	Lyly died. Corneille born
1607	Daughter Susanna married Dr. Hall			Timon of Athens	Dekker and Webster's **Westward Ho!**	Settlement of Jamestown
1608	Birth of granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. Death of mother (Mary Arden)	Pericles (1609)		Antony and Cleopatra	Captain John Smith's **A True Relation.** Middleton's **A Mad World**	Milton born. Quebec founded
1609	**Sonnets. A Lover's Complaint**			Coriolanus	The Douai Old Testament	Separatists (Pilgrims) in Leyden
1610	Purchased more real estate	Cymbeline			Strachey's **Wracke and Redemption**	Henry IV (Navarre) assassinated
1611	Subscribed for better highways	Winter's Tale **The Tempest**			King James Bible (A.V.). Bellarmine's **Puissance du Pape**	Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden
1613	Invested in London house property. Brother Richard died		Henry VIII		Drayton's **Polyolbion**	Globe Theatre burned
1616	Made his will. Daughter Judith married Thomas Quiney. Died April 23 (May 3, New Style)				Captain John Smith's **New England.** Folio edition of Jonson's Poems. D'Aubigné's **Les Tragiques** (1577)	Cervantes died. Beaumont died. Baffin explores Baffin's Bay. Harvey lectured on the circulation of the blood

DISTRIBUTION OF CHARACTERS

In this analysis are shown the acts and scenes in which the characters (see *Dramatis Personæ*, page 2) appear, with the number of speeches and lines given to each.

NOTE. Parts of lines are counted as whole lines.

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
THESEUS	I, i	9	66
	IV, i	6	41
	V, i	33	128
		48	235
EGEUS	I, i	2	29
	IV, i	3	11
		5	40
LYSANDER	I, i	11	53
	II, ii	7	44
	III, ii	22	59
	IV, i	3	10
	V, i	7	12
		50	178
DEMETRIUS	I, i	1	2
	II, i	6	23
	II, ii	2	2
	III, ii	22	62
	IV, i	4	25
	V, i	14	23
		49	137
PHILOSTRATE	V, i	6	25
		6	25
HIPPOLYTA	I, i	1	5
	IV, i	1	7
	V, i	12	23
		14	35
HERMIA	I, i	17	56
	II, ii	5	26
	III, ii	24	80
	IV, i	2	3
		48	165
HELENA	I, i	6	43
	II, i	6	34
	II, ii	5	32
	III, ii	17	116
	IV, i	2	4
		36	229
QUINCE (PROLOGUE)	I, ii	20	42
	III, i	13	33
	IV, ii	5	9
	V, i	2	35
		40	119
SNUG (LION)	I, ii	1	2
	IV, ii	1	3
	V, i	2	9
		4	14
BOTTOM (PYRAMUS)	I, ii	14	46
	III, i	23	81
	IV, i	9	41
	IV, ii	3	14
	V, i	10	60
		59	242
FLUTE (THISBE)	I, ii	3	4
	III, i	3	8
	IV, ii	4	11
	V, i	8	34
		18	57
SNOUT (WALL)	I, ii	1	1
	III, i	6	9
	V, i	2	12
		9	22

		NO. OF SPEECHES	NO. OF LINES
STARVELING (MOONSHINE)	I, ii	1	1
	III, i	2	3
	IV, ii	1	2
	V, i	3	7
		7	12
OBERON	II, i	11	79
	II, ii	1	8
	III, ii	10	63
	IV, i	5	46
	V, i	2	28
		29	224
TITANIA	II, i	6	64
	II, ii	1	8
	III, i	6	34
	IV, i	9	23
	V, i	1	4
		23	133
PUCK	II, i	7	37
	II, ii	1	18
	III, i	3	11
	III, ii	18	151
	IV, i	2	3
	V, i	2	36
		33	256
FAIRY	II, i	3	28
		3	28
1 FAIRY	II, ii	2	6
		2	6
2 FAIRY	II, ii	1	4
		1	4
CHORUS	II, ii	2	8
		2	8
PEASEBLOSSOM	III, i	3	3
	IV, i	1	1
		4	4
COBWEB	III, i	3	3
	IV, i	1	1
		4	4
MOTH	III, i	2	2
		2	2
MUSTARDSEED	III, i	3	3
	IV, i	2	2
		5	5
ALL	I, ii	1	1
	III, i	1	1
		2	2

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ[1]

THESEUS,[2] duke of Athens
EGEUS,[3] father to Hermia
LYSANDER, betrothed to Hermia
DEMETRIUS, in love with Hermia
PHILOSTRATE,[4] master of the revels to Theseus
HIPPOLYTA,[5] queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus
HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander
HELENA,[6] in love with Demetrius

OBERON, king of the fairies
TITANIA, queen of the fairies
PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW (or ROBIN GOODFELLOW, a Puck)[7]
PEASEBLOSSOM } fairies
COBWEB
MOTH
MUSTARDSEED

Other Fairies in attendance on Oberon and Titania

QUINCE, a carpenter } presenting in the Interlude the parts of
BOTTOM, a weaver
FLUTE, a bellows-mender
SNOUT, a tinker
SNUG, a joiner
STARVELING, a tailor

PROLOGUE
PYRAMUS
THISBE
WALL
LION
MOONSHINE

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta

SCENE: *Athens, and a wood near it*

[1] First given by Rowe. Theobald added the Interlude characters.

[2] In II, i, 76, and V, i, 38, obviously trisyllabic, as in Chaucer, with the accent on the first syllable (The′-se-us). While elsewhere in the text it might be scanned as dissyllabic (The′-seus, the more classical pronunciation), Furness and others regard it throughout as trisyllabic. Notes on the sources of these names are given when each character is introduced into the play.

[3] Trisyllabic, with the accent on the second syllable (Eg-e′-us).

[4] Trisyllabic, with the accent on the first syllable (Phil′-o-strate).

[5] Accented on the second syllable (Hip-pol′-y-ta).

[6] Accented on the first syllable (Hel′-e-na).

[7] As 'Puck' is a generic term, this alternative arrangement would be proper enough. In the stage directions of Quartos and Folios 'Puck,' 'Robin Goodfellow,' and 'Robin' are used indifferently.

ACT I

Scene I. *Athens. The palace of* Theseus

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, *and* Attendants

Theseus. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace: four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Scene I Capell. — *Athens* . . . seus . . . Attendants. Enter Theseus, Theseus, QqFf omit. — *Enter* Thes- Hippolita, with others QqFf.

ACT I. Scene I. In the Quartos *A Midsommer Nights Dream*[1] is not divided into acts and scenes; in the Folios it is divided into acts only. — *Enter* Theseus . . . Shakespeare would find 'Theseus' in Chaucer's *The Knightes Tale* and North's Plutarch, *The Life of Theseus*; 'Hippolyta' ('Ipolita' in Chaucer) is from Plutarch; 'Philostrate' is the name assumed by Arcite in *The Knightes Tale*. See Introduction, Sources.

4. lingers: makes to linger, checks. This causative sense is also found in *Richard II*, II. ii, 72. See Abbott, § 291.

5–6. dowager: a widow with rights of dower. See Murray. As long as she lives she receives a share of the income from the estate and the heir is kept from full [illegible]y nent of his inheritance. — **revenue.** Accented on first syllable; in line 158 on second.

[1] So printed in the First and Second Folios. The Third and Fourth Folios have *A Midsummers nights Dreame*. Rowe was the first to hyphen *Midsummer* and *Night's*, a usage f[illegible]ed by many editors.

HIPPOLYTA. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time:
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit* PHILOSTRATE]
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS

EGEUS. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS. Thanks, good Egeus; what 's the news with thee?

7. **night** Q_1 | nights Q_2Ff.
10. **New-bent** Dyce | New bent Rowe | Now bent QqFf.
15. [*Exit* . . . | QqFf omit.
20. *Enter* EGEUS . . . | Enter Egeus and his daughter . . . Ff.

13. **pert**: lively. This meaning is still common in dialect.

15. **companion**. In a contemptuous sense. Cf. *2 Henry IV*, II, iv, 132.

19. **triumph**: festivities, pageants. Cf. Bacon, Essay XXXVII, *Of Masques and Triumphs;* Milton, *L'Allegro*, 120.

20. *Enter* EGEUS . . . 'Egeus' ('Egæus' in Second Folio) is so spelled in Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women;* 'Ægeus' is the spelling in North's Plutarch; 'Hermia' (corresponding to Chaucer's 'Emelye') is probably from a legend of Aristotle and Hermia referred to by Greene; 'Lysander' and 'Demetrius' are from North's Plutarch. — **duke**. Chaucer's title for Theseus. Cf. *Genesis*, xxxvi, 15.

EGEUS. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child.
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
And stol'n the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, — messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth.
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
Which shall be either to this gentleman

27. **This man** QqF1 | This F2F3F4 Rowe Pope Capell. — **bewitch'd** Qq Ff | witch'd Theobald Johnson.

31. **feigning . . . feigning** Rowe | faining . . . faining QqFf. — **feigning love** | feigned love Hanmer Walker.

24. **Stand forth, Demetrius.** The Quartos and Folios print this, and "Stand forth, Lysander," [illegible] 26, as stage directions.

31. **feigning . . . feigning.** Furness defends the retention of the Quarto and the Folio 'faining,' holding that the word "is used in its not unusual sense of 'loving,' 'longing,' 'yearning'"; but do not lines 32 and 36 justify 'feigning'?

32. Imprinted thyself by s[illegible]h upon her imagination.

Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
THESEUS. What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid.
To you your father should be as a god;
One that compos'd your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
HERMIA. So is Lysander.
THESEUS. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
HERMIA. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
THESEUS. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.
HERMIA. I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
THESEUS. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,

44. **our law.** Such a law was enacted by Solon.
46. **be advis'd**: take heed, consider well. Cf. Fr. *s'aviser*.
51. To let the form remain as it is, or to destroy it.
54. **in this kind**: in a question of this kind (marriage).
68. **Know**: inquire. — **blood**: impulses, passions. Cf. line 74.

Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

HERMIA. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me
For everlasting bond of fellowship,
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

81. whose QqF1 | to whose F2F3.

69. **Whether.** A monosyllable. Cf. III, ii, 81. See Abbott, § 466.

71. **mew'd**: shut up. See [illegible]ray. Cf. *Richard III*, I, i, 132.

76. **earthlier happy**: happy in a mere earthly way. — **distill'd**. The thought that the flower whose fragrance has been perpetuated by distillation is more fortunate than that which dies upon its stalk, occurs more than once in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

81. **his lordship, whose**: the sovereignty of him to whose.

DEMETRIUS. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.
LYSANDER. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
EGEUS. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him;
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.
LYSANDER. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia.
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I 'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.
THESEUS. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me:

92. **crazed**: faulty, with a flaw in it. See Murray.
98. **estate unto**: bestow upon. Cf. *The Tempest*, IV. i, 85.
110. **spotted**: wicked. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, II, iii, 74. The implicit figure is more clearly seen in 'spotless.' Cf. Lat. *maculosus*.
113. **self-affairs**: my own private affairs. Cf. 'self-danger.' *Cymbeline*, III, iv, 149; 'self-offences,' *Measure for Measure*, III, ii, 280.

I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will:
Or else the law of Athens yields you up —
Which by no means we may extenuate —
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius, and Egeus, go along;
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but* LYSANDER *and* HERMIA]

LYSANDER. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

HERMIA. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

LYSANDER. Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood, —

125. **nuptial** QqF1 | nuptialls F2 F3F4.
127. [*Exeunt all . . . and* HERMIA] Exeunt. Manet Lysander and Hermia Ff | Exeunt Qq.
128. Scene II Pope.
131. **mine** Ff Delius | my Qq Globe Camb.
132. **Ay me!** | Eigh me Qq | Ff omit. — **for aught** Q1 | For ought F1 | Hermia for ought F2. — **ever I could** F1 Delius | I could ever Qq Globe Camb.

124. **business**. A trisyllabic as in *Julius Cæsar*, IV, i, 22. "The original pronunciation of the word, shortened to a dissyllable since it ceased to be a noun of state." — Murray.

131. **Beteem**: vouchsafe, supply. But here '-teem' is possibly used, as Pope understood it [illegible] dialect sense of 'pour out upon.'

134. With Lysander's words, cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X. 896–908.

HERMIA. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!
LYSANDER. Or else misgraffed in respect of years. —
HERMIA. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young!
LYSANDER. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends. —
HERMIA. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes!
LYSANDER. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And, ere a man hath power to say, 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.
HERMIA. If, then, true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny.
Then let us teach our trial patience,

136. low Theobald | loue QqFf. | eie F1 | eye F2F3F4.
139. friends Qq | merit Ff Rowe.
140. eyes Qq Globe Camb Delius
143. momentany Qq | momentarie Ff | momentary Knight.

136–140. For a note on stichomythia, see 194–201.

137. misgraffed: ill grafted, badly joined. 'Graft' is a modification of the earlier 'graff' through confusion with 'graffed.' See Skeat.

143. momentany: momentary. "'Momentany' seems to have been the earlier form, from Fr. *momentaine*, Lat. *momentaneus*." — Clar.

145. collied: black, smutted as with coal. Cf. 'collier.'

146. spleen: sudden outbreak. The spleen was supposed to be the special seat of eruptive or explosive emotion.

147–148. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II, ii, 119–120.

149. confusion: ruin, destruction. A quadrisyllable. 'Edict,' line 151, is accented on the last syllable; 'patience,' line 152, is a trisyllable. For these and similar pronunciations, see Abbott, §§ 479, 490.

152. Teach ourselves patience to bear our trial.

Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.
LYSANDER. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child;
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night:
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.
HERMIA. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,

159. remote Qq | remou'd Ff. 167. to a Qq | for a Ff.

155. fancy's: love's. Cf. II, i, 161; III, ii, 96; IV, i, 160.

159, 160. Johnson suggested the transposition of these lines. This was adopted in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare. "Common sense dictates this transposition." — Keightley.

160. respects: looks upon, regards. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, V, iv, 20.

167. Cf. Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*, 642: "And, for to doon his observaunce to May"; *Troilus and Criseyde*, II, 112: "And lat us don to May som observaunce." It would seem that the expression 'to do observance' was almost proverbial in this connection. English poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson abounds in references to May-day customs and observances. Cf. Herrick's *Corinna's Maying*, Wordsworth's *Ode composed on May Morning*, etc.

By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA

HERMIA. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HELENA. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars, and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,

172. **loves** Q_1 | loue Q_2Ff. 180. Scene III Pope.
174. **Troyan** QqF1F2 | Trojan F4. 182. **your** Qq | you Ff.

170. Ovid tells how the arrow "with the golden head" excited love, and that with the leaden head repelled it: "tone causeth Love, the tother doth it slake." — Golding's Translation.

171, 172. Singer transposed these lines. — **Venus' doves.** Cf. 'dove-drawn,' *The Tempest*, IV, i, 94. The reference in line 172 is probably to the *cestus*, or girdle, of Venus.

173–174. Shakespeare has many allusions to the story of Dido and Æneas. 'Fire' suggests both the hopeless love of the queen and the funeral pyre on which she perished. For other examples of noun compounds like 'Carthage queen,' see Abbott, § 430.

182. Here 'fair' means beauty. Cf. *As You Like It*, III, ii, 99–100.

183. **lode-stars**: guiding stars. The 'lode-star' is the pole-star, the star which 'leads' the sailor. Here 'lode-' connotes also irresistible attraction, as in 'lodestone.'

When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'll give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

HERMIA. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

HELENA. O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

HERMIA. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

HELENA. O, that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

HELENA. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA. None but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

HERMIA. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

187. **Yours would I** Hanmer, Your words I QqF1 | Your words Ide F2. — 191. **I 'll** Delius | ile Q1 | Ile Q2 — F1F2 | I 'ld Globe Camb. — 200. **Helena** QqFf | Helen Dyce. — **no fault** Q1 | none Q2Ff.

186. 'Favour' here means both 'countenance' (cf. *Macbeth*, I, v, 73) and 'good-will.' Cf. II, i, 12, and IV, i, 46, where it means 'token of good-will.'

190. **bated**: excepted (abated). Cf. *Hamlet*, V. ii, 23.

191. **I 'll.** 'Will' for 'would' is not uncommon in Elizabethan writers. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, V, i, 288. — **translated**: transformed. Cf. III, i, 108–109; *Sonnets*, XCVI, 8.

194–201. A good example of stichomythia, the dialogue in alternate lines, with one speaker opposing or correcting the other.

Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me.
O then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

LYSANDER. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

HERMIA. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet:
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow; pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander; we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit* HERMIA]
Helena, adieu;
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit*]

205. **as** Q_1 | like Q_2Ff.
207. **unto a** Q_1 | into Q_2Ff.
216. **sweet** Theobald | sweld QqFf.
219. **stranger companies** Theobald | strange companions QqFf.
225. **dote** Qq | dotes Ff.

209. **Phœbe.** A name of Diana (Artemis) as goddess of the moon; hence used of the moon itself. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, ii, 39: "A title to Phœbe, to Luna, to the moon."

215. **faint.** The epithet has reference to color rather than to perfume. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 122, and *Cymbeline*, IV, ii, 221.

219. **companies:** companions. Cf. *Henry V*, I, i, 55.

HELENA. How happy some o'er other-some can be! 226
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes. 230
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind: 235
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear, 240
So the boy Love is perjur'd every where:
For, ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,

229. do Qq | doth Ff. 239. so oft Q1 | oft Q2 | often F1.

231. admiring. May be construed either as a verbal noun (cf. Abbott, § 178), or as a present participle with 'of' a redundant preposition.

232. quantity. Most editors interpret as 'proportion' (cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 177); here probably it has the sense of 'strength,' 'virtue,' 'efficacy,' as in *Hamlet*, III, iv, 75.

235. The idea of a blind or a blindfolded Cupid does not seem to be much earlier than the fourteenth century. Its first appearance in English literature is in Chaucer, who probably derived it from Boccaccio. Cf. *The Knightes Tale*, 1963–1965:

> Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
> Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
> And blind he was, as it is ofte sene.

242. eyne: eyes. Rhyme evidences usually determine Shakespeare's use of this old English plural.

He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine:
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit*]

SCENE II. *The same. A room in* QUINCE'S *house*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

QUINCE. Is all our company here?

BOTTOM. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

248. **this** Qq | his Ff.
SCENE II Capell | Scene IV Pope. — *The same . . . house* | QqFf omit. — *Enter* QUINCE . . . | Enter Quince the Carpenter, Snug the Ioyner, Bottome the Weauer, Flute the bellowes-mender, Snout the Tinker, and Starueling the Taylor Ff.

249. **dear expense.** The force and fitness of 'expense' here are partly shown by 'pain' in the next line. Staunton aptly notes that, as if to gratify Demetrius with this intelligence, "she makes a most painful sacrifice of her feelings, his thanks, even if obtained, are dearly bought."

SCENE II. "In this scene Shakespeare takes advantage of his knowledge of the theatre to ridicule the prejudices and the competitions of the players." — Johnson.

2. BOTTOM. Appropriately named from 'bottom,' an obsolete word for 'a ball of thread.' — **You were best**: it would be best for you. See Abbott, § 230. — **generally**. Of course he means 'individually.' This kind of humor is common in Shakespeare's earlier plays.

3. **scrip**: schedule. In *As You Like It*, III, ii, 171, it means 'wallet.'

QUINCE. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point. 9

QUINCE. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves. 14

QUINCE. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom the weaver.

BOTTOM. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

QUINCE. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

QUINCE. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes: I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest. Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant; I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

9. **to a** Qq | on to a $F_1F_2F_3$. — **a point** | appoint F_4.
11. **Thisby** | Thisbie Ff.
19. **gallant** Qq | gallantly Ff.

8–9. **grow to a point.** Either (1) 'come to a full stop,' 'conclude,' or (2) 'come to the point.'

22. **condole**: lament. The co[illegible]on Elizabethan meaning.

23. **Ercles**: Hercules. Hercules, like Herod (cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 16), was a typical stage ranter and roarer. In Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, the old player says, "The twelve labours of Hercules have I terribly thundered."

24. **tear a cat.** A burlesque [illegible]on to the slaying of the Nemean lion by Hercules has been read here, but the expression seems to

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

QUINCE. Francis Flute the bellows-mender.

FLUTE. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

25-32. As prose in QqFf. 37. **Flute** Q_1 | Q_2Ff omit.

have been a proverbial one for ranting and blustering on the stage. — **split**. Another common Elizabethan expression, nautical in origin (cf. *The Tempest*, I, i, 65), signifying violent action. With these references to rant and bluster cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 9–15.

25–32. A quotation from, or, more probably, a travesty upon, some ranting old play. Cf. these lines (spelling modernized) from an early Elizabethan translation of Seneca's *Hercules Furens*:

O Lord of ghosts! whose fiery flash
That forth thy hand doth shake,
Doth cause the trembling lodges twain
Of Phœbus' car to shake.
. . . . . .
The roaring rocks have quaking stirr'd,
And none thereat hath push'd;
Hell gloomy gates I have brast ope
Where grisly ghosts all hush'd
Have stood.

38. **a wandering knight**: a knight-errant (Lat. *errans*).

FLUTE. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE. That 's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

BOTTOM. And I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too. I 'll speak in a monstrous little voice; 'Thisne, Thisne'; 'Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

QUINCE. No, no: you must play Pyramus; and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM. Well, proceed.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling the tailor.

STARVELING. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout the tinker.

SNOUT. Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father; Snug the joiner, you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

44. And QqFf | An Pope Globe. 57. here Qq | there Ff.

40–41. Cf. Hamlet's words to the player, *Hamlet*, II, ii, 442. On the Elizabethan stage the parts of women were taken by young men or boys. Cf. *As You Like It*, Epilogue, 18–19; *Coriolanus*, II, ii, 100.

42–43. If the actor had not a face suitably feminine, a mask, then part of a lady's costume, might be worn. — **speak as small**. Slender says of Anne Page, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I, i, 49, "She has brown hair and speaks small like a woman."

44. **And**: if. Modern editors usually substitute 'an.' See Murray.

45. **'Thisne, Thisne.'** Quartos and Folios print as proper names, and probably the spelling represents the "monstrous little voice." "It may be questioned whether the true reading is not 'thisne, thisne'; that is, 'in this manner' [meaning which 'thissen' has in several dialects." — Camb.

SNUG. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM. Let me play the lion too. I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

QUINCE. And you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL. That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us; but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you and 't were any nightingale.

QUINCE. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-fac'd man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE. Why, what you will.

BOTTOM. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour

59-60. **if it be** $Q_qF_2F_3$ | if be F_1. Ff Delius | if Qq Globe Camb.
66. **And** Q_1 | If Q_2Ff | An Capell.
70. **friends** | friend F_4. — **if that**
73. **you** Qq | Ff omit.
74. **and** QqFf | an Pope.

66, 74, etc. **And**. See note, line 44. See Abbott, § 101.
73. **you**. The old, or ethical, dative. See Abbott, § 220.
76. **proper**: well-formed, handsome. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I, i, 28.
82–84. It was a custom at this time to dye the beard.

beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French crown colour beard, your perfect yellow. 84

QUINCE. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefac'd. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace-wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight. There will we rehearse: for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

BOTTOM. We will meet; and there we may rehearse more obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect. Adieu.

QUINCE. At the duke's oak we meet. 96

BOTTOM. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt*]

84. **colour** Qq | colour'd Ff. 89. **will we** Q1 | we will Q2Ff.

85. 'French crowns' were either (1) 'light yellow gold coins,' or (2) 'bald heads.' Cf. *Henry V*, IV, i, 243–245.

92. **properties.** Still the technical word for 'stage requisites.'

95. **obscenely.** A humorous mix-up of 'obscurely' and 'unseen.' — **Take . . . Adieu.** Given to Quince by Singer and in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare.

97. "When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase; the sense of the person using them being, that he would 'hold,' or keep, his promise, or they might 'cut his bowstrings,' demolish him for an archer." — Capell. A more convincing explanation is given by Malone: "To meet, whether bow-strings hold or [illegible] cut, is to meet in all events. 'He hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string,' says Don Pedro in *Much Ado*, III, ii, 10, 'and the little hangman dare not shoot at him.'" Henry Cuningham ingeniously interprets the expression, 'hold or cut bow-strings,' as 'in any weather.' "In very wet weather the bow-string, if not protected, would be more liable to fray and snap asunder."

ACT II

SCENE I. *A wood near Athens*

Enter, from opposite sides, a FAIRY, *and* PUCK

PUCK. How now, spirit! whither wander you?
FAIRY. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.

ACT II. SCENE I Rowe | Actus Secundus Ff. — *A wood near Athens* Capell | QqFf omit. — *Enter* . . . PUCK | Enter a Fairie at one doore, and Robin goodfellow at another QqFf.

1. PUCK Rowe | Robin Qq | Rob. Ff (so elsewhere).

3, 5. **Thorough** . . . **thorough** Q1 | Through . . . through Q2Ff.

Enter . . . PUCK. See page 2, Dramatis Personæ, note 7.

2–5. Guest speaks of the sameness of rhythm here, calling up in the mind the idea of a multitudinous succession.

7. **moon's**. Some editors print 'moonës,' the inflected genitive of Middle English. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'moony' was adopted. But the text requires no change. 'Moon's' is metrically dissyllabic. — **sphere**. According to the Ptolemaic astronomy the moon and the stars were set in crystal spheres that revolved round the earth.

9. **orbs**: fairy rings. They were supposed to be made by the night-tripping fairies dancing their merry roundels. As the ground

The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I 'll be gone.
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

PUCK. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king;

became parched under the feet of the moonlight dancers, Puck's office was to refresh it with sprinklings of dew, thus making it greener than ever. Cf. *The Tempest*, V, i, 36–38. Modern science, of course, explains the condition in a much more prosaic way.

10–11. The allusion is very probably to Elizabeth's band of Gentlemen Pensioners, who were chosen from among the handsomest and tallest young men of family and fortune; they were dressed in habits richly garnished with jewels and gold lace. — **spots you see.** Cf. *Cymbeline*, II, ii, 38–39.

12. **favours.** Cf. IV, i, 46, and see note I, i, 186.

16. **lob.** See Skeat. "Several Teutonic words of similar sound express the general notion of something heavy, clumsy, or loosely pendent." — Murray. Cf. Milton's 'lubber [lubbar] fiend,' *L'Allegro*, 110. While 'lob' seems to have been a well-established fairy epithet, the contrast between the dainty form of the fays and Puck's squat figure is probably implied in the word.

20. **Oberon.** In the old romance, *Huon of Bordeaux*, is introduced "the dwarfe of the fayre kynge Oberon." Keightley has shown that 'Oberon' (the English form of the French 'Auberon') is the same word as 'Alberich,' the 'Elber[illegible]' of Wolfram von Eschenbach's ballad of *Otnit* in the *Heldenbuch*. See Introduction, Sources.

She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear or spangl'd starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

FAIRY. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow. Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;

33. **sprite** Q_1 | spirit Q_2Ff. 35. **villagery** Hanmer | Villageree Q_1 | Villagree $F_1F_2F_3$ | Vilagree F_4.
34. **not you** Q_1 you not Q_2Ff.

23. **changeling**. "This is commonly used for the child supposed to be left by the fairies, but here for the child taken away."—Johnson. Cf. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I, x, 65:

> From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft,
> There, as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
> And her base Elfin brood there for thee left:
> Such, men do Chaungelings call, so chaung'd by Faeries theft.

30. **square**: quarrel. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, II, i, 100.

32. **Either**. A monosyllable here. See Abbott, § 466.

33–41. This account of Robin Goodfellow, with which cf. Milton, *L'Allegro*, 104–114, is gathered from folklore. See Introduction, Sources.

35. **villagery**. A collective term meaning either (1) 'villages,' or (2) 'village folk.'

36. **Skim**. For the change of construction, see Abbott, § 415.—**labour in the quern**: grind corn in the handmill.

And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck;
Are not you he?

PUCK. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me:
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,

42. speak'st] speakest me Capell.
46. filly Q_1] silly Q_2Ff.
47. bowl F4] bole QqF1F2F3.
50. dewlap Rowe] dewlop QqFf.

38. barm: frothy 'head,' yeast. Still heard in dialect.

39. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IX, 634–640.

40. 'Hobgoblin' here, like 'sweet Puck,' is a title of endearment or propitiation. 'Hob' is a rustic or familiar form of 'Rob' or 'Robin.' "Just as the Greeks called the Furies *Eumenides*, 'the benevolent ones,' so is Robin called *Good*-fellow." — Sidgwick.

47. gossip's bowl. Originally a christening-cup (see Murray, under 'gossip') compounded of ale [illegible]neg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs or apples. Cf. Milton, *L'Allegro*, 100. 'Gossip' is an interesting example of degeneration of meaning. Originally it meant 'a sponsor in baptism,' from 'God' and 'sib' ('related'), the primary idea being "one related to the baptized child in respect of God." — Verity.

48. roasted crab. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 935.

51. aunt: old dame. — saddest tale. Cf. *Richard II*, V, i, 40–43.

And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

FAIRY. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his train; from the other,* TITANIA, *with hers*

OBERON. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

TITANIA. What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence;
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON. Tarry, rash wanton; am not I thy lord?

TITANIA. Then I must be thy lady; but I know
When thou hast stol'n away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love

54-55. **cough . . . laugh** | coffe ... loffe QqFf.

60. Scene II Pope. — *Enter* . . . . Enter the King of Fairies, at one doore with his traine; and the Queene, at another with hers QqFf.

61. TITANIA | Qu.QqFf.—**Fairies, skip** Theobald | Fairy skip QqFf | Fairies, trip Dyce conj.

65. **hast** Qq | wast Ff.

54. "The custom of crying 'tailor' at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board." — Johnson.

56. **waxen**: increase. — **neeze**: sneeze. Cf. *Job*, xli, 18.

58. Either 'room' is dissyllabic, or 'fairy' trisyllabic.

60. **Titania**. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, III, 173, uses 'Titania' as an epithet of Diana, as being the sister of Sol, the sun-god, a Titan. He also applies the name to Latona, as daughter of the Titan Cœus; to Pyrrha as descendant of the Titan Prometheus; and to Circe.

66, 68. 'Corin' (see Dramatis Personæ, *As You Like It*) and 'Phillida' (Phillis) were typical lovers' names in pastoral poetry.

67. **of corn**: made of oat straw. — **versing**: singing in verse of.

To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded? and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?
And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.

69. **steep** Delius steepe Q2Ff | steppe Q1 Globe Camb | step Capell.
79. **Ægle** Rowe | Eagles Q9Ff.
80. **Antiopa** | Atiopa F1.

69. **steep.** Against the reading 'steppe,' adopted by Globe and Camb, is the fact that this Russian word was seemingly unknown in England until long after Shakespeare's day.

78. **Perigenia.** The name in North's Plutarch is 'Perigouna.'

79–80. **Ægle.** 'Ægles' (cf. [illegible]'ling in Quartos and Folios) is the form in North's Plutarch, where the stories of Ariadne and of Antiopa are also given.

81. **forgeries**: fictitious inventions. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 90.

82. **spring**: beginning, opening. Cf. 'spring of day,' 'day-spring.'

86. **ringlets.** Either (1) th[illegible]ibs' or 'fairy rings' of line 9, or (2) the 'curls of the fairies.' [illegible]rness favors the latter.

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Hath every petty river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:

91. **Hath** QqFf | Have Rowe Globe Camb Delius. — **petty** Ff | pelting Qq Globe Camb Delius.
95. **his** | its Pope.
97. **murrion** QqFf Globe Camb | murrain Theobald Delius.

90–113. For possible references here to the unseasonable summer of 1594, see Introduction, Date of Composition.

91. **Hath.** See Abbott, §§ 247, 334. — **petty.** "I can see no good reason why we should here desert the Folio, especially as there is, according to all authorities, from Dr. Johnson down, a tinge of contempt in the 'pelting' of the Quartos." — Furness.

92. **continents**: the banks that 'contain' (Lat. *continere*) them.

97. **murrion.** An obsolete form of 'murrain.' Cf. *Exodus*, ix. 3.

98. **nine men's morris.** This was a plat of green turf cut into a sort of chess board, for the rustic youth to exercise their skill upon. The game was called 'nine men's morris,' because the players had each nine men, which they moved along the lines cut in the ground, until one side had taken or penned up all those on the other.

99. Either (1) intricate courses laid out on luxuriant grass for rural sports, or (2) traces of dances on the luxuriant village green.

101–102. For 'winter here' Hanmer read 'winter cheer,' and in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare 'minstrelsy' was

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries: and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which.

106. **thorough** $Q_1F_2F_3$ through $Q_2F_1F_4$.
107. **hoary-** F_3, hoary Q_1F_4 hoared $Q_2F_1F_2$.
109. **thin** Halliwell (Tyrwhitt conj.) | chinne QqF_1F_2 | chin F_3F_4 | chill Theobald conj.
112. **childing** $QqF_1F_2F_3$ | chiding F_4 Pope.
113. **mazed** F_1F_2 | amazed F_3F_4.

substituted. The reading of Quartos and Folios may be paraphrased in this way: Poor human beings, not blessed with immortality as we are, have grown weary of this joyless summer, and are longing for winter with its nights cheerful with songs and carols. In the 'Warwick' edition of the play, E. K. Chambers puts a full stop after line 101, and interprets lines 102–104 as "We have neglected the hymns and carols due from us to the moon. Therefore she too is wrathful," etc. Cf. I, i, 73. But the 'Therefore' of line 103 belongs, as Malone indicated, to the "succession of 'therefores' all pointing to the fairy quarrel as the cause of the war of the elements."

105, 106. Johnson suggested that these lines be transposed. — **rheumatic.** Accented on first syllable. 'Rheum' was especially used of fluids that issue from the [illegible]s or mouth. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II, i, 266. — **distemperature:** disorder of the elements. Malone and Clar make it refer to the dissension between Oberon and Titania.

109. Hiems'. The personification of winter. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 901. — **thin:** scantily covered. Cf. *Richard II*, III, ii, 112.

112. childing: fruitful, proli[illegible] often applied to plants.

114. increase: produce. Cf. *Sonnets*, XCVII, 6; *Psalms*, lxvii, 6.

And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

OBERON. Do you amend it then; it lies in you.
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

TITANIA. Set your heart at rest;
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order;
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking th' embarked traders on the flood,
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.

OBERON. How long within this wood intend you stay?

TITANIA. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

133. do I Q_2 | doe I Q_1 | I do Ff.

117. **original**: origin. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II, 375.
121. **henchman**: page of honor. See Murray and also Skeat.

TITANIA. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit* TITANIA *with her train*]

OBERON. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK. I remember.

OBERON. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd. A certain aim he took

142. [*Exit* TITANIA *with her train*] Exeunt QqFf.
152. saw Q1 | say Q2Ff.
154. all arm'd | alarm'd Theobald.

145–165. For a detailed account and discussion of the allegorical and historical matter that has been read into this passage of exquisite poetry, see the sixteen octavo pages of comment in Furness. The "mermaid on a dolphin's back" has been interpreted as Mary Queen of Scots wedded to the Dauphin of France; the "fair vestal throned by the west" as Elizabeth; "Cupid all arm'd" as the Earl of Leicester; and the "little western flower" as either Amy Robsart or Lettice Knollys. Not improbably Shakespeare borrowed some of his imagery from court pageantry which he had either seen or heard. There is evidence, for example, of a pageant given before Elizabeth at Kenilworth, in 1575, in which appeared a mermaid and a dolphin. See quotation in note, III, i, 41.

146. Since: when. Used thus after verbs denoting recollection. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, V, i, 219 See Abbott, § 132.

150. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, v, 17. See note on Ptolemaic astronomy, line 7.

At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK. I 'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit*]

OBERON. Having once this juice,
I 'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey or on busy ape,

172-173. I 'll . . . minutes | prose in Ff. — **round** Q_1 | Q_2Ff omit. **176. then** Q_1 | when Q_2Ff. **178. On meddling** | Or meddling Rowe.

161. **fancy-free**: untouched by love. See note, I. i. 155.
165. **love-in-idleness**. The common pansy has many popular names.
172. This seems to have been a kind of proverb.
173. 'Forty' was often used for an indefinite number.

She shall pursue it with the soul of love;
And ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I 'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him*

DEMETRIUS. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I 'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stol'n unto this wood;
And here am I, and wood within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

HELENA. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel. Leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.

DEMETRIUS. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?

180. **from off** Theobald Capell | from of Q_1 | off from Q_2Ff.
185. Scene III Pope.
187. **slay . . . slayeth** Theobald (Thirlby conj.) stay...stayeth QqFf.
188. **unto** Qq | into Ff.
189. **and wood** Q_2Ff Delius | and wodde Q_1 | and wode Hanmer Globe Camb.
190. **my** QqFf, with Malone.

189. The first 'wood' is the old adjective (Anglo-Saxon *wōd*) meaning 'angry,' 'mad.' It is still heard in dialect.

192. 'Adamant' (see Murray) was often used as synonymous with 'lodestone.' "There is now a dayes a kind of adamant which draweth unto it fleshe, and the same so strongly, that it hath power to knit and tie together two mouthes of contrary persons, and drawe the heart of a man out of his bodi[illegible]hout offending any part of him." — Edward Fenton, *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*, 1569.

Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?

HELENA. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me.
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love —
And yet a place of high respect with me —
Than to be used as you use your dog?

DEMETRIUS. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit:
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

HELENA. And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;
To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.

HELENA. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,

199. **you** Q_1 | thee Q_2Ff.
203. **lose** Q_2Ff | loose Q_1.
207. **use** Qq | doe Ff.
217. **privilege: for that** QqFf Globe Camb | privilege for that. Malone (Tyrwhitt conj.) Delius.

211. **impeach**: call in question. Cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 281: "doth impeach the freedom of the state."

217. **privilege**: protection. — **for that**: because. Malone's punctuation, suggested by Tyrwhitt and adopted in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare, makes 'that' refer to Helena's leaving the city.

For you in my respect are all the world.
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

DEMETRIUS. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

HELENA. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd, —
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin: the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger: bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies!

DEMETRIUS. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

HELENA. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[*Exit* DEMETRIUS]

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit*]

OBERON. Fare thee well, nymph. Ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

235. **Ay** Rowe | I QqFf. — **the field** Q_1 | and field Q_2Ff.
239. [*Exit* . . . | QqFf omit.
240. **I'll** | Ile Qq | I Ff.
244. Scene IV Pope. — *Re-enter* . . . | Enter . . . QqFf (after **wanderer**).

228. **Apollo . . . Daphne.** Apollo, the sun-god, pursued the nymph Daphne, who was changed to a laurel (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I).

PUCK. Ay, there it is.
OBERON. I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight,
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in;
And with the juice of this I 'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth; anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady. Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love;
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.
PUCK. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.
[*Exeunt*]

246. **where** QqFf | whereon Pope. 248. **luscious** QqFf | lush Steevens.

246. 'Where,' 'wild,' or 'thyme' may be scanned as dissyllabic; or, as Furness suggests, a pause before 'where' should take the place of a syllable. Pope's 'whereon' has been widely accepted.

248. If 'luscious' be pronounced as trisyllabic, the line is an Alexandrine. As such it suggests the rich growth of honeysuckle.

250, 251. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare these lines were introduced after line 253, Keightley's arrangement.

264. **first cock crow.** Cf. *King Lear*, III, iv, 121.

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood*

Enter TITANIA, *with her train*

TITANIA. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song:
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep:
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

FAIRIES *sing*

1 FAIRY. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS. Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,

SCENE II Capell | Scene V Pope. — *Another . . . wood* Capell | QqFf omit. 9. 1 FAIRY | QqFf omit. 13, 24. CHORUS Capell | QqFf omit.

1. The 'roundel' here was probably a dance in a ring while the Chorus of the Fairies' song was sung.
4. **rere-mice**: bats. Cf. Browning, *Paracelsus*, III, 391.
6. **clamorous owl.** Cf. *Macbeth*, II, iii, 64–65.
7. **quaint**: dainty. Cf. *The Tempest*, I, ii, 317. See Murray.
11. Cf. the ingredients of the witches' caldron, *Macbeth*, IV, i, 14–16.

Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

2 FAIRY. Weaving spiders, come not here:
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS. Philomel, with melody, &c.

1 FAIRY. Hence, away! now all is well;
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt* FAIRIES. TITANIA *sleeps*]

Enter OBERON, *and squeezes the flower on* TITANIA'S *eye-lids*

OBERON. What thou see'st when thou dost wake,
Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristl'd hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit*]

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA

LYSANDER. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way.
We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

20. 2 FAIRY Ff Delius | 1 Fai. Q1 Camb | Globe omits.
25. 1 FAIRY Ff | 2 Fai. Qq.
26. [*Exeunt* FAIRIES. TITANIA *sleeps*] Shee sleepes F1 | Qq omit.
27. *Enter . . . eye-lids* Capell | Enter Oberon QqFf.
34. [*Exit*] Rowe | QqFf omit.
35. Scene VI Pope. — **wood** Q1 | **woods** Q2Ff.

HERMIA. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
LYSANDER. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both:
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.
HERMIA. Nay, good Lysander: for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
LYSANDER. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it:
Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny:
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
HERMIA. Lysander riddles very prettily.
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant: and, good night, sweet friend:
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!
LYSANDER. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I:
And then end life when I end loyalty!
Here is my bed; sleep give thee all his rest!
HERMIA. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

[*They sleep*]

48. **we can** Qq | can you Ff. 49. **interchained** Qq | interchanged Ff.

45. Do not misunderstand my innocent meaning.

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Through the forest have I gone.
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence! who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he my master said
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wak'st, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid!
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit*]

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA, *running*

HELENA. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

67. **found** Q_1 | finde Q_2Ff.
68. **On** $QqF_2F_3F_4$ | One F_1.
84. Scene VII Pope. — **Stay** Qq F_1 | Say $F_2F_3F_4$.

77. Many attempts have been made to render this line more rhythmical. "The text of the Folio is right, I think, and waits for its harmony on the reader's voice." — Furness. Pronounce 'kill-courtesy' as trisyllabic.

79. **owe**: own. In III. ii. 85. it has the usual meaning.

HELENA. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.
DEMETRIUS. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit*]
HELENA. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears;
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear.
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
LYSANDER. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
HELENA. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

103. [*Awaking*] QqFf omit.
104. **Nature shows** | nature shewes Qq, nature her shewes F1 | nature here shews F2F3F4 | Nature shews her Malone.
105. **thy heart** | my heart Dyce.

86. **darkling**: in the dark. Cf. *King Lear*, I, iv, 237.
99. **sphery eyne**: eyes bright as stars in their spheres.

LYSANDER. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia, but Helena I love;
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd,
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.

HELENA. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd! [*Exit*]

LYSANDER. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there;
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!

113. **Helena I** Q_1 | Helena now I Q_2Ff.

118. **ripe**: ripen. Cf. *As You Like It*, II. vii. 26: "And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe."

119. **point of human skill**: highest reach of sagacity.

For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or, as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight! [*Exit*]

HERMIA. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear.
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, and if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh;
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit*]

140. **they did** Qq | that did Ff.
145. [*Awaking*] Dyce Qq Ff omit.
150. **you** Qq | yet Ff.
153. **and** Qq Ff | an Capell.
154. **swoon** | swoune Q_1 | swound $Q_2F_2F_3F_4$ | sound F_1.

154. **of all loves**: in the name of all loves. See Abbott, § 169.

ACT III

SCENE I. *The wood.* TITANIA *lying asleep*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

BOTTOM. Are we all met?

QUINCE. Pat, pat; and here 's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke. 5

BOTTOM. Peter Quince, —

QUINCE. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

BOTTOM. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that? 11

SNOUT. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done. 14

ACT III. SCENE I Rowe | Actus Tertius Ff. — *The . . . asleep* | QqFf omit. — *Enter* . . . Rowe | Enter the Clownes QqFf.

2. **Pat, pat**: exactly, just as it should be.

7. **bully**. Originally a term of endearment, then of *camaraderie*.

12. **By 'r lakin**. A popular contraction of 'by our ladykin'; like 'marry,' a petty oath by the Virgin Mary. Cf. 'by 'r lady,' *Hamlet*, II, ii, 445, etc. — **parlous**. A dialectic form of 'perilous.' Cf. *As You Like It*, III, ii, 45; *Richard III*, II, iv, 35; III, i, 154.

BOTTOM. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver: this will put them out of fear.

QUINCE. Well, we will have such a prologue: and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING. I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in — God shield us! — a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

SNOUT. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — 'Ladies,' — or 'Fair ladies, I would wish you,' — or, 'I would request you,' — or, 'I would entreat you, — not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are'; and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

27. **yourselves** Ff; your selfe Qq. 41. **them** Qq, him Ff.

22. **eight and six**. The syllables in 'common metre.'

41. Malone thought it not improbable that Shakespeare here had in mind the following incident recorded in *Merry Passages and Jeasts:*

QUINCE. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things: that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber: for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight. 44

SNOUT. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac: find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE. Yes, it doth shine that night.

BOTTOM. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement. 51

QUINCE. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then there is another

45. SNOUT | Sn. QqF1 | Snug F2. 48. Enter Pucke Ff.

There was a spectacle presented to Q: Elizabeth vpon the water, and amongst others, Harr. Golding: was to represent Arion vpon the Dolphin's backe, but finding his voice to be very hoarse and vnpleasant when he came to performe it, he teares of his Disguise, and swears he was none of Arion, not he, but eene honest Har. Goldingham: which blunt discoverie pleasd the Queen better then if it had gone thorough in the right way; yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well.

Scott uses this incident in *Kenilworth*, XXX:

With this gracious answer, the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was among the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part . . . paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, 'Cog's bones! he was none of Arion or Orion either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her Majesty's health from morning till midnight.'

42. **there is.** For this construction, see Abbott, § 335.

52–53. **bush of thorns.** The man in the moon was popularly represented with a bundle of sticks and identified with either Isaac bearing wood for his own sacrifice, or Cain carrying the thorns he had offered in sacrifice as the produce of his land (cf. Dante, *Inferno*, XX), or, more frequently, the man stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath (*Numbers*, xv, 32). — **lantern.** See V, i, 134.

thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom? 59

BOTTOM. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK *behind*

PUCK. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor; 70
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

58. SNOUT | Sno. Q1 | Sn. Q2F1 | Snu. F2 | Snug F3F4.
62. or let QqFf | and let Globe Camb Delius.
68. Scene II Pope. — *Enter* PUCK *behind*. Enter Robin QqFf.

67. **cue**: catchword. The last word usually of the preceding speech, which served as a h[illegible] him who was to speak next. Cf. line 90. "A *qu*, a term used among Stage-plaiers, à Lat. *Qualis*, i.e. at what manner of word the Actors are to beginne to speake one after another hath done his speech." — Minsheu, 1625. See Murray for other theories of origin.

68. **hempen home-spuns**. Cf. '[illegible]en vassals,' *Coriolanus*, III, ii, 9.

70. **toward**: in preparation. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 77; V, ii, 376.

BOTTOM. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet, —

QUINCE. Odours, odours.

BOTTOM. — odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit*]

PUCK. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. [*Exit*]

FLUTE. Must I speak now?

QUINCE. Ay, marry, must you: for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I 'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

QUINCE. 'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, 'never tire.'

FLUTE. O, — As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

73, 75, etc. BOTTOM | Pyra. (Py.) Q1 | Pir. Q2Ff.
74. Odours, odours Ff | Odours, odorous Qq | Odorous, odorous Collier.
79. PUCK Ff | Quin. Qq.
80, 83, etc. FLUTE | This. (Thys. Thisb.) QqFf.
81, 88, etc. QUINCE | Pet. QqFf.

73–74. odious . . . odours. Cf. Dogberry's "comparisons are odorous," *Much Ado About Nothing*, III, v, 18, and Mrs. Malaprop's "caparisons are odorous," in Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

85. **juvenal**: youth. Used thrice by Shakespeare, and always in ridicule. — **Jew.** Verity suggests that here, and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, III, i, 136, "my incony Jew," 'jewel' may be intended.

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head*

BOTTOM. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUINCE. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt* QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING]

PUCK. I 'll follow you, I 'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I 'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit*]

BOTTOM. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT

SNOUT. O Bottom, thou art chang'd! what do I see on thee?

BOTTOM. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit* SNOUT]

93. *Re-enter* PUCK . . . *ass's head* Capell, Enter Piramus with the Asse head Ff (after line 101).
95. [*Exeunt* QUINCE . . . STARVELING] The Clownes all exit Ff.
107. [*Exit* SNOUT] Dyce.

93. The punctuation and the wording have been much worked over by editors, many favoring a comma after 'were.' But the text of Quartos and Folios, followed substantially here, is humorously satisfactory. Why should not . . om blunder over his pauses as he does over his phrases?

101. The Protean versatility of Robin Goodfellow is part of the popular lore about him. Cf. *Robin Goodfellow; his Mad Pranks:*

> Thou hast the power to change thy shape,
> To horse, to dog, to hog, to ape.

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit*]

BOTTOM. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can; I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings*]

The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill, —

TITANIA. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

BOTTOM. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay; —

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 'cuckoo' never so?

113. [*Sings*] Pope | QqFf omit.
114. ousel- | Ousel Pope | Woosell QqF1F2F8 | Woosel F4.
117. with little Qq | and little Ff.
118. [*Awaking*] QqFf omit.
119. [*Sings*] QqFf omit.

108–109. translated: transformed. See note, I, i, 191.

114. 'Ousel' is an old name for the 'blackbird' or 'merle.'

117. little quill. This refers to the wren's shrill note.

120. The cuckoo is called 'plain-song,' as having no variety of note, but singing in a monotone, after the manner of the ancient simple chant. Cf. Nym's 'very plain-song.' *Henry V*, III, ii, 6.

121–124. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 908–909. — set his wit: match his wit against. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II, i, 94.

TITANIA. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

BOTTOM. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days: the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITANIA. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA. Out of this wood do not desire to go;
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore go with me.
I 'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep.
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

127-129. As in Q_1, in Q_2Ff line 129 precedes line 127.

148. Peaseblossom . . . Mustardseed Qq | Ff omit.

134. gleek: jeer, scoff. Cf. *Henry V*, V, i, 78. See Murray.

148. "The names of the four attendant fairies, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed, are Shakespeare's invention, chosen perhaps to typify grace, [illegible]ness, speed, and smallness." — Sidgwick. For 'Moth' Grant White reads 'Mote.'

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARDSEED

PEASEBLOSSOM. Ready.
COBWEB. And I.
MOTH. And I.
MUSTARDSEED. And I.
ALL. Where shall we go?

TITANIA. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM. Hail, mortal!
COBWEB. Hail!
MOTH. Hail!
MUSTARDSEED. Hail!

BOTTOM. I cry your worships mercy heartily. I beseech your worship's name.

149. Scene III Pope. — *Enter* . . . *and* MUSTARDSEED | Enter . . . Mustard-seede, and foure Fairies Ff. — PEASEBLOSSOM. **Ready** . . . ALL. **Where shall we go** | one line without Fairies' names in QqFf.

161–164. PEASEBLOSSOM. **Hail**... MUSTARDSEED. **Hail!** | 1 Fai. Haile mortall, haile. 2 Fai. Haile. 3 Fai. Haile QqFf.

165. **worships** QqFf | worship's Rowe.

156. Poets insist upon linking the glow-worm's light with its eyes. Cf. Herrick, *The Night-piece:* "Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee."

165. 'To cry mercy' means simply 'to ask pardon.'

COBWEB. Cobweb.

BOTTOM. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM. Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED. Mustardseed.

BOTTOM. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house. I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA. Come, wait upon him: lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt*]

168. you of QqFf | of you Rowe.
174. you of Qq | of you Ff.
176. After this line F_1 has *Peas.* *Pease-blossome*, which $Qq F_2 F_3 F_4$ omit.
180. your F_3F_4 | you QqF_1F_2.
184. weeps, weeps weepes, weepes Q_1 | weepes, weepe Q_2Ff.
186. love's Pope | louers QqFf.

168. For 'of' in the sense of 'as regards,' see Abbott, § 174.

169. Cobweb is often used to stanch blood from a cut.

172. Squash in Shakespeare's day meant 'unripe peascod.'

177–178. Bottom here seems rather too deep for the editors. Does he mean "your patience" in suffering "that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef" to devour "many a gentleman of your house"? It has been proposed to read "passing well"; but this might be a parlous defeature of Bottom's idiom.

185. enforced: violated. A not uncommon meaning.

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood*

Enter OBERON

OBERON. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?
PUCK. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake.

SCENE II Capell | Scene IV Pope. — *Enter* OBERON | Enter King of Fairies, and Robin goodfellow Qq | Enter King of Pharies, solus F1.
5. **haunted** | gaunted F1.
13. **thickskin** | thick-skull Hanmer.

3. **in extremity**: to an extreme degree. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 178.

5. **night-rule**. Either (1) 'nocturnal revelry' ('night-reuel'), or (2) 'nocturnal order of affairs.'

9. **patches**: clowns. "Perhaps an anglicized form of Ital. *pazzo*." — Murray. — **mechanicals**: artisans. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I, i, 3.

13. **sort**: company. In a contemptuous sense. Cf. line 21.

14. Some editors put a comma after 'presented' and omit it after 'sport,' but the change is unnecessary.

When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head.
Anon his Thisby must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly:
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there;
When, in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

OBERON. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK. I took him sleeping — that is finish'd too —
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

19. **mimic** | Mimmick F1 | Minnick Q1.

17. **nole** (noll, nowl): head, noddle. Usually used disparagingly.
21. **russet-pated choughs**: jackdaws with brownish-gray heads.
25. **stamp**. Fairies had power to shake the earth. Cf. IV, i, 83. Theobald and Johnson suggested 'stump.'
36. **latch'd**: anointed, smeared. See Skeat and also Murray.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS

OBERON. Stand close; this is the same Athenian.

PUCK. This is the woman, but not this the man.

DEMETRIUS. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me; would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia? I 'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd, and that the moon
May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with th' Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dread, so grim.

DEMETRIUS. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty;
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA. What 's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

41. Scene V Pope.
48, 49. One line in QqFf.
58. **murder'd** | murderer Ff.
60. **look** | looks Ff.

48. **the deep**. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare the reading 'knee-deep,' said to have been suggested by Coleridge, was adopted, the similarity between the Elizabethan *kne* and *the* making the change plausible. But 'plunge' suggests that the reading of Quartos and Folios is correct.

DEMETRIUS. I 'd rather give his carcass to my hounds.
HERMIA. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.
DEMETRIUS. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
HERMIA. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.
DEMETRIUS. And if I could, what should I get therefor?
HERMIA. A privilege never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so;
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit*]

64. **I 'd** | Ide Q_2 | I 'de Ff | I had Q_1 Globe Camb Delius.
68. **tell true, tell true** | tell true Q_2F_1 | tell true, and $F_2F_3F_4$.
69. **have** Qq | a Ff.
80. **so** Pope | QqFf omit.

70. **touch**: exploit, stroke, feat. Cf. Fr. *coup*.

74. **on a mispris'd mood**. Either (1) 'in mistaken anger,' or (2) 'on a mistaken fancy.' 'Misprise,' meaning 'to mistake,' is from Old Fr. *mesprendre* (mod. Fr. *méprendre*), Lat. *minus-prehendere* (*prendere*). 'Misprise,' meaning 'to despise,' is from Old Fr. *mespriser* (mod. Fr. *mépriser*), Low Lat. *minus-pretiare*. Similarly 'misprision,' meaning 'mistake,' as in line 90, *Sonnets*, LXXXVII, 11, etc., must not be confused with 'misprision,' meaning 'contempt,' as in *All's Well that Ends Well*, II iii 159.

78. **And if**. Usually printed 'an if' in modern editions.

DEMETRIUS. There is no following her in this fierce vein.
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.
[*Lies down and sleeps*]

OBERON. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight.
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true-love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear.
By some illusion see thou bring her here;
I 'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit*]

OBERON. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,

85. bankrupt sleep Rowe | bankrout slip Q_2Ff.
87. [*Lies . . .* | Lie downe Q_2Ff.
88. Scene VI Pope.
97. costs QqFf | cost Hanmer.
99. do Q_2 | due Q_1 | doth Ff.

96. fancy-sick: lovesick. — **cheer**: countenance. See Murray.

97. According to the old notion that every sigh consumed a drop of blood. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 123; *2 Henry VI*, III, ii, 61, 63. — **costs**. The relative frequently takes a singular verb, though the antecedent be plural. See Abbott, § 247.

101. Tartar's bow. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, iv, 5.

Sink in apple of his eye!
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON. Stand aside; the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER *and* HELENA

LYSANDER. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

122. Scene VII Pope. 123. **come** Qq | comes Ff.

113. **lover's fee.** Halliwell-Phillipps says this meant three kisses.
119. **alone:** above all things. See Abbott, § 18.
121. **preposterously:** perversely. The etymological sense.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
HELENA. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's; will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.
LYSANDER. I had no judgment when to her I swore.
HELENA. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
LYSANDER. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
DEMETRIUS. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand. O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
HELENA. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment;

145. **all are** Qq | are all Ff.

141–142. This figure occurs again in *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 375.

144. princess. The word here has a superlative force, 'paragon.' 'purest.' — **seal.** The metaphor is repeated in *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, xiii, 125. The pretty extravagance in this passage suggests Spenser's description of Una, *The Faerie Queene*, I, i, 4:

> A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
> Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow;
> Yet she much whiter.

If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena.
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

LYSANDER. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia: this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do till my death.

HELENA. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,

151. were Qq | are Ff. 167. till Q1 | to Q2Ff.

150. **join in souls**: agree together. The old text needs no emendation, but for 'in souls' editors have suggested 'in flouts,' 'in scorns,' 'in scoffs,' 'in shoals,' 'insolents,' 'ill souls,' etc.

157. **trim**. As an adjective "mostly used with irony." — Schmidt.

169. **will none**: will none of her, do not wish for her.

And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYSANDER. Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes:
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER. Why should he stay whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA. What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

HERMIA. You speak not as you think; it cannot be.

172. **is it** Q_1 | it is Q_2Ff.
173. **Helen** Q_1 | Q_2Ff omit.
175. **aby** Q_1 | abide Q_2Ff.
177. Scene VIII Pope.
182. **thy** Qq | that Ff.
190. **bear** F_4 | bare $QqF_1F_2F_3$.

175. **aby**: pay for. So in line 335. When this word was becoming archaic "and through association of sense between *abye* (pay for) *a deed*, and *abide the consequences of a deed*, 'abide' has been erroneously used for 'abye' = pay for, atone for, suffer for." — Murray.

188. **oes**: orbs, circles. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 45.

HELENA. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, — O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;

201. **is** QqF1 | and is F2F3F4. 210. **an** QqF4 | a F1F2F3.

197. **bait**: harass (as dogs a bear). — **derision**. A quadrisyllable.

198–208. Gibbon, in his account of the friendship between the great Cappadocian saints, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, *Decline and Fall*, Chapter XXVII, note 29, refers to this passage, and quotes a parallel passage from Gregory's Greek poem on his own life. The historian adds, "Shakespeare had never read the poems of Gregory Nazianzen, he was ignorant of the Greek language; but his mother-tongue, the language of nature, is the same in Cappadocia and in Britain."

203. **artificial gods**: divine artificers. Cf. Lat. *artifex*.

204. **needles**. Steevens pr[illegible] 'neelds,' a spelling representing a pronunciation still heard in dialect. See Abbott, § 465.

So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart:
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 't is not maidenly;
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA. I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not; it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate;
But miserable most, to love unlov'd?
This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA. I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,

213. first, like Theobald | first life QqFf. 220. passionate Ff | Qq omit.

213–214. "We had 'two of the first,' i.e., 'bodies,' like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but 'one crest.'" — Douce.

237. persever. In Shakespeare always accented on second syllable.

Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other: hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicl'd.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But, fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault,
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA. O excellent!

HERMIA. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat;
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS. I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS. Quick, come!

HERMIA. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER. Away, you Ethiope!

DEMETRIUS. No, no, sir;
Seem to break loose, take on as you would follow,

243. mine Q_2Ff | my Q_1. 250. prayers Theobald | praise $QqFf$

242. **argument**: subject of sport. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, II, ii, 100.

257–258. **No, no . . . break loose.** See Camb or Furness for the many attempts made to amend the passage. The Quartos read, "No, no; he 'll Seem to break loose"; the Folios, "No, no, Sir, seem to break loose" (as o[illegible]e). Some editors give, "No, no, he 'll—" to Hermia; some, to Helena. The Folio text, followed

But yet come not; you are a tame man, go!

LYSANDER. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,

Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

HERMIA. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?

Sweet love, —

LYSANDER. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!

Out, loathed medicine! O hated potion, hence!

HERMIA. Do you not jest?

HELENA. Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS. I would I had your bond, for I perceive

A weak bond holds you: I 'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?

Although I hate her, I 'll not harm her so.

HERMIA. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?

Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?

Am not I Hermia? are you not Lysander?

I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:

Why, then you left me — O, the gods forbid! —

In earnest, shall I say?

260. **burr** | bur QqF1 | but F2. Qq | hated Pope Globe Camb. — **potion** Q1 | poison Q2Ff.
264. **O hated** Ff Delius | ô hated

above with changed punctuation, may be interpreted, No, no, sir; keep up the pretence of getting free. — **take on**: get angry.

259. **tame**: pusillanimous, cowardly. Cf. Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, II, i, 81–83: "But why are you so tame? Why do you not speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?"

265. **sooth**: in truth. 'Soothsayer' is etymologically 'truth teller.'

LYSANDER. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 't is no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

HERMIA. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him?

HELENA. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA. Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;

282. juggler. Probably tris[illegible]bic. See Abbott, § 477. — **canker-blossom**: the worm that preys on the leaves or buds of flowers. Cf. II, ii, 3. The common hedge-rose was sometimes called 'canker,' as in *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 176, and *Much Ado About Nothing*, I, iii, 28, or 'canker-bloom,' as in *Sonnets*, LIV, 5; but Hermia's metaphor denotes something not merely [illegible] in quality but destructive.

300. curst: ill-tempered. Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, I, i, 186.

I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

HERMIA. Lower! hark, again.

HELENA. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you:
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him:
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further. Let me go;
You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA. Why, get you gone; who is 't that hinders you?

HELENA. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HERMIA. What, with Lysander?

HELENA. With Demetrius.

LYSANDER. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA. O, when she 's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school:
And though she be but little, she is fierce.

320. HELENA | Hel. QqF3F4 | Her. F1F2.

HERMIA. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.

LYSANDER. Get you gone, you dwarf:
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made:
You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS. Follow! nay, I 'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.
[*Exeunt* LYSANDER *and* DEMETRIUS]

335. aby Q1 | abie Q2 | abide Ff. 338. [*Exeunt* . . . | Exit . . . QqFf.

329. **minimus**: creature of the smallest size. Cf. 'minim' in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VII, 482. — **knot-grass**. This is *Polygonum aviculare*, a low-growing herb of the buckwheat family, which certainly hinders all vegetation but itself, and was supposed to check the growth of children also. So in Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, II, ii, 38–40: "the child 's a fatherless child; and say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 't were worse than knot-grass; he would never grow after it." In *Comus*, 542, Milton speaks of 'knot-grass dew-besprent,' using the expression in a general way of pasture grass.

333. **intend**: pretend. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II, ii, 35.

335. **aby**: pay for, suffer for. See note, line 175.

337. **Of thine or mine**. Cf. *The Tempest*, II, i, 28.

338. **cheek by jowl**: cheek [illegible] cheek, side by side, close together. 'Jowl' ('jole') originally meant 'jaw' or 'jawbone.'

HERMIA. You, mistress, all this coil is long of you.
Nay, go not back.
HELENA. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit*]
HERMIA. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. [*Exit*]
OBERON. This is thy negligence; still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.
PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did you not tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.
OBERON. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie, therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;

343. [*Exit*] Capell | QqFf omit.
344. Ff omit this line.
345. Scene IX Pope | Enter Oberon and Puck (Pucke F1) Ff.
346. **wilfully** Qq | willingly Ff.
349. **had** Q1 | hath Ff.

339. **coil**: trouble.—**long of**: because of. Distinct from 'along of.'
347. **shadows**: shadowy beings, fairies. Cf. V, i, 415.
352. **sort**: fall out, happen. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV, i, 242.

And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision:
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I 'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

PUCK. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,

374. **employ** | imploy Q_1 apply Q_2 | imply $F_1F_2F_3$. 379. **night's swift** | night-swift F_1 | nights-swift $F_2F_3F_4$.

368. **his**: its. 'Its' was just coming into use in Shakespeare's day.

379. Cf. *Cymbeline*, II, ii, 48; Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 59.

380. **Aurora's harbinger**. Cf. Milton, *Song on May Morning*, 1.

381–387. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 150–155; Milton, *Ode on the Nativity*, 232–236. Suicides buried at cross-roads, and drowned people whose bodies were never recovered, were doomed to wander.

They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

OBERON. But we are spirits of another sort.
I with the morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair-blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit*]

PUCK. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER. I will be with thee straight.

PUCK. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit* LYSANDER, *as following the voice*]

395. [*Exit*] QqFf omit.
396-399. Prose in Ff.
401. Two lines in Ff.
404. [*Exit . . .* | QqFf omit.

389. The reference is probably to Cephalus, the famous hunter, who was loved by Aurora, but remained true to Procris, his wife. Cf. Pyramus's words, V, i, 197: "Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true." "Oberon merely means to say metaphorically that he has sported with Aurora, the morning's love, the first blush of morning." — Halliwell-Phillipps.

391. **eastern gate**. Cf. Milton, *L'Allegro*, 59; *Psalms*, xix, 5.

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! in some bush? where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defil'd
That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS. Yea, art thou there?

PUCK. Follow my voice; we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt*]

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER. He goes before me and still dares me on;
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fall'n am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down*] Come, thou gentle day!
For, if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps*]

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS

PUCK. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

413. *Re-enter* . . . | QqFf omit
414. **he is** | he 's F1.
416. *shifting places* Ff.
421. **comest** | com'st Ff.

421. **Ho, ho, ho!** In *Robin Goodfellow: his Mad Pranks and Merrie Jests*, the story of many of Robin's tricks closes with, "Then would he go laughing 'ho, ho, hoh!' as his use was." In miracle plays and in moral plays the Devil [illegible]ghter of scorn and fiendish mirth were often expressed in this way.

DEMETRIUS. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK. Come hither; I am here.

DEMETRIUS. Nay, then thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see;
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. [*Lies down and sleeps*]

Re-enter HELENA

HELENA. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest;
And sleep, that sometime shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[*Lies down and sleeps*]

PUCK. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad;
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

425. **now** Q1 Q2Ff omit.
430. [*Lies . . . sleeps*] Malone | QqFf omit.
435. **sometime** F1F2 | sometimes Qq Globe Camb Delius.
436. [*Lies . . .* | Sleepe QqFf.

432. **comforts.** "This may be an accusative, the object of 'shine'; it may be a vocative like 'night'; or it may be a nominative with 'shine' as its verb." — Furness.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA. Never so weary, never so in woe:
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers:
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps*]

PUCK. On the ground
Sleep sound;
I 'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

[*Squeezing the juice on* LYSANDER'S *eye*]

When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye;
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit*]

442. *Re-enter* HERMIA | Enter Hermia F1F2 (after line 440).
447. [*Lies . . .*] Dyce | QqFf omit.
451. **To your** Rowe | your QqFf.
452. [*Squeezing . . . eye*] Rowe | Qq Ff omit.
463. [*Exit*] They sleepe all the Act Ff.

461. Cf. *Love's Labour's L* V. ii. 885. 'Jacks' and 'jills' are used punningly in *The Taming of the Shrew*, IV, i, 51–52.

ACT IV

Scene I. *The same.* Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, *and* Hermia, *lying asleep*

Enter Titania *and* Bottom; Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, Mustardseed, *and other* Fairies *attending*: Oberon *behind unseen*

Titania. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bottom. Where 's Peaseblossom? 5

Peaseblossom. Ready.

Bottom. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where 's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cobweb. Ready. 9

Bottom. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipp'd humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-

ACT IV. Scene I Rowe | Actus Quartus Ff. — *The same . . . asleep* | QqFf omit. — *Enter* Titania . . . *unseen* | Enter Queene of Faieries, and Clowne, and Faieries: and the king behinde them QqFf.

2. **amiable**: lovely. Cf. *Psalms*, lxxxiv, 5. — **coy**: stroke, caress. Literally 'make quiet.' Spenser uses the form 'accoy.'

bag break not: I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where 's Mounsieur Mustardseed? 16

MUSTARDSEED. Ready.

BOTTOM. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

MUSTARDSEED. What 's your will? 20

BOTTOM. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

TITANIA. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

BOTTOM. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let 's have the tongs and the bones. [*Music. Tongs. Rural music*]

TITANIA. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay; good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow. 31

TITANIA. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee thence new nuts.

BOTTOM. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me. 36

26. **Let 's** | Lets Q1 | Let us Q2Ff. 27. [*Music ...*] *music* Ff | Qq omit.

18. **neaf**: fist. In Third Folio 'newse'; in Fourth, 'news.'

21. **Cavalery**. 'Cavalero' is the spelling in the later Folios. Bottom is here in a strange predicament, and has not had time to perfect himself in the nomenclature of his fairy attendants; and so he gets the names somewhat mixed. Probably, as Grey suggested, he is here addressing Cavalery Peaseblossom, who has been dispatched for the honey-bag, but gives him the wrong name.

30. **bottle**: bundle. Still [illegible] in English dialect. Cf. the expression 'to look for a needle in a bottle of hay.'

TITANIA. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt* Fairies]
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep*]

Enter PUCK

OBERON. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers:
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds

38. **all ways** Theobald | alwaies QqF1. — [*Exeunt* . . . | QqFf omit.
43. *Enter* PUCK | Enter Robin goodfellow and Oberon Ff. — [*Advancing*] Collier | Ff omit.
46. **favours** Q1 | sauors Q2F1.

38. **be all ways**: disperse in all directions.

39. This line has led to much comment, many editors trying to explain 'woodbine' and 'honeysuckle' as meaning the same thing, chiefly with reference to the use of 'woodbine' in II, i, 248. In Jonson's *Vision of Delight* we have the following: "Behold, how the blue bindweed doth itself infold with honeysuckle." Upon this passage Gifford notes as follows: "The woodbine of Shakespeare is the blue bindweed of Jonson: in many of our counties woodbine is still the name for the great convolvulus."

40–41. Cf. *The Comedy of Errors*, II, ii, 176.

46. Cf. II, i, 12, and see note, I, i, 186. "These with syren-like allurement so entised these quaint squires, that they bestowed all their flowers upon them for favours." — Greene, *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*.

Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy-land.
And, now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That he, awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

68. Be Qq | Be thou Ff. 70. o'er Theobald | or QqFf.

70. **Dian's bud.** Probably the bud of the *Agnus Castus*, or 'Chaste-tree.' "The vertue of this herbe is, that he wyll kepe man and woman chaste." — Macer, *He* . Cf. the Chaucerian poem, *The Flower and the Leaf*, 472–475:

That is Diane, goddesse of chastite;
And for bicause that she a maiden is,
In her hond the braunch she bereth, this
That *agnus-casti* . men call properly.

— **Cupid's flower**: love-in-idleness. See note, II, i, 165.

TITANIA. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
OBERON. There lies your love.
TITANIA. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loath his visage now!
OBERON. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.
TITANIA. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!
[*Music, still*]
PUCK. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.
OBERON. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly.
And bless it to all fair posterity.
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.
PUCK. Fairy king, attend, and mark;
I do hear the morning lark.
OBERON. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade;

76. **do** $Q_1F_2F_3F_4$ | doth Q_2F_1. — his Q_1 this Q_2Ff.
77. **this** Qq | his Ff.
79. five Theobald | fine QqF_1F_2 Rowe | find F_3F_4.
81. **Now** Q_1 | Q_2Ff omit.
87. **posterity** Q_2Ff | prosperitie Q_1.
90. **Fairy** Qq | Faire F_1F_2.
93. **the night's** Rowe | the nights Q_2Ff | nights Q_1.

80. [*Music, still*]. 'Music' either (1) 'continuously,' or (2) 'softly.'
92. **sad**: grave, serious. Cf. *Henry V*, IV, i, 318.

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.
TITANIA. Come, my lord; and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt*]
[*Horns winded within*]

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train*

THESEUS. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd:
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley: let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an* Attendant]
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.
HIPPOLYTA. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard

98. Sleepers Lye still Ff (as stage direction).
99. [*Horns*...] Winde horns Q2F2. *and traine* | Enter...all his traine Ff.
100. Scene II Pope.—*Enter*... 104. **let them** | Pope omits.
105. [*Exit*...] Q9Ff omit.
114. **Seem'd** F2 | Seeme Q9F1.

101. **observation**: "observance to a morn of May." Cf. I, i. 167.
102. **vaward**: forepart. A variant of 'vanward' or 'vanguard.'
112. **chiding**. The word is used with reference to incessant noise in *As You Like It*, II, i. 7, and *Henry VIII*, III, ii, 197.

So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
THESEUS. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded: and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?
EGEUS. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.
THESEUS. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?
EGEUS. It is, my lord.

128. **of their** Q_1 | of this Q_2Ff. 130. **rite** Pope | right QqFf.

117. **So flew'd, so sanded**: having the same hanging chaps and the same sandy color. Cf. Lyly, *Mydas*, IV, iii: "huntsmen, that know not when a hound is fleet, faire flewd, and well hanged; being ignorant of the deepenesse of a hounds mouth, and the sweetnesse."

120. **match'd in mouth like bells**. T. S. Baynes says:

> It was a ruling consideration in the formation of a pack, that it should possess the musical fulness and strength of a perfect canine quire. And hounds of good voice were selected and arranged in the hunting chorus on the same general principles that govern the formation of a cathedral or any other more articulate choir.

THESEUS. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. [*Horns and shout within.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, *and* HERMIA, *wake and start up*]
Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past;
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?
LYSANDER. Pardon, my lord.
THESEUS. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies.
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?
LYSANDER. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think — for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is —
I came with Hermia hither. Our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law —
EGEUS. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stol'n away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she should be your wife.
DEMETRIUS. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

135. [*Horns . . . up*] Theobald | Hornes and they wake. Shout within, they all start vp Ff.
149. **might** Q1 | might be Q2Ff.

150. **Without**: beyond. Cf. 1, 1, 165; *The Tempest*, V, i, 271.

And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power —
But by some power it is — my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like a sickness, did I loathe this food:
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met;
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by-and-by, with us,
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three,

160. following Q_1 | followed Q_2Ff.
169. saw Steevens | see QqFf.
170. a QqFf | in Steevens Globe Camb Delius.
172. I do Q_1 | do I Q_2Ff.
175. more will hear | more will here Q_1 | will heare more Q_2 | shall heare more Ff.

163. Abbott scans 'melted' as trisyllabic. See § 486.

170. Furness calls Steevens's change of 'a' to 'in' "as harmless as it is needless." The 'but' was probably caught up from the next line by a printer's error.

179. for: because, inasmuch as, since. See Abbott, § 151.

We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt* THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train*]

DEMETRIUS. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

HERMIA. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

HELENA. So methinks;
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA. Yea; and my father.

HELENA. And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS. Why, then we are awake. Let 's follow him;
And, by the way, let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt*]

BOTTOM. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer; my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute the bellows-mender! Snout the tinker! Starveling! God 's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past

189–190. Are you . . . are awake Qq | Ff omit.
194. did bid Q_1 | bid Q_2Ff.
197. Scene III Pope.
201. have had a dream Qq | had a dream Ff.

186. **with parted eye**: with the two eyes acting separately.

188–189. "As the jewel which one finds is his own and not his own; his own, unless the loser claims it." Not a very satisfactory explanation, perhaps, but the [illegible]hat is forthcoming. Demetrius has been Helena's own and not her own. This is plain.

the wit of man to say what dream it was; man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had, but man is but a patch'd fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit*]

Scene II. *Athens.* Quince's *house*

Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling

Quince. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Starveling. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported. 4

210. **ballad** F_4 | ballet $QqF_1F_2F_3$. Scene II Capell | Scene IV Pope. — *Enter* . . . | Enter Quince, Flute, Thisbie, Snout, and Starueling Ff. 3. Starveling Ff | Flut. Q_1 | Flute Q_2.

205. **patch'd.** A reference to the motley dress or painted face of the professional jester. While 'patch' in the sense of 'fool' is probably an anglicized form of the Italian *pazzo* (see Murray), the expression in the text shows how the word took form and meaning.

213. **at her death:** at Thisbe's death. Theobald changed the text to 'after death,' a reading adopted in previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare.

4. **transported.** Probably used humorously in the sense of 'transformed.' Cf. Quince's 'translated,' III, i, 108–109.

FLUTE. If he come not, then the play is marr'd; it goes not forward, doth it? 6

QUINCE. It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

QUINCE. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE. You must say 'paragon'; a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught. 14

Enter SNUG

SNUG. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a-day during his life; he could not have scap'd sixpence a-day: and the duke had not given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hang'd; he would have deserv'd it: sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour! 25

5, 9, etc. FLUTE | Thys. (This. Thisb.) QqFf.
15. *Enter* . . . | Enter Snug, the Joyner QqFf.
20. and QqFf | an Pope Globe Camb Delius.

17. **we had . . . made men**: our fortunes would have been made.
19–20. Steevens suggested this is an allusion to Thomas Preston, who received a pension from Elizabeth.

BOTTOM. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for, if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

QUINCE. Let us hear, sweet Bottom. 29

BOTTOM. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath din'd. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferr'd. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words. Away! go, away! [*Exeunt*]

27. **no** Ff | not Qq. 28. **right as** Qq | as Ff.

32. **strings to your beards.** "That is, to prevent the false beards, which they were to wear, from falling off." — Malone.

34. **preferr'd**: "handed in to the 'manager of mirth' to be included in his list of sports ripe for performance (V, i, 42). This was, for Bottom, equivalent to its acceptance." — Herford. Theobald suggested reading 'proffered' here, and his comment on 'preferr'd' is: "This word is not to be understood in its most common acceptation here, as if their play was chosen in *preference* to the others (for that appears afterwards not to be the fact), but means that it was given in among others for the duke's option. So, in *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 27–28 —

> Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go,
> And presently prefer his suit to Cæsar."

ACT V

Scene I. *Athens. The palace of* Theseus

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, Lords, *and* Attendants

Hippolyta. 'T is strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

Theseus. More strange than true; I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend 5

ACT V. Scene I. Rowe. Actus Quintus Ff | Qq omit. — *Athens* . . . Theseus Qq Ff omit. — *Enter* Theseus, Hippolyta . . . Attendants Enter Theseus, Hippolita, Egeus and his Lords Ff.

5, 6. apprehend More than Theobald | apprehend more Then Qq Ff.

Enter Theseus . . . The introduction of Egeus in the stage direction of the Folios, and the giving him all the speeches which belong to Philostrate as master of the revels, except that beginning, 'No, my noble lord,' show, as Grant White suggested, that the two parts were originally played by the same actor.

3. antique: strange, fantastic. Accented on the first syllable. In this sense the more correct spelling is 'antic.' See Murray for evidence that 'antic' was not developed in English from 'antique,' but was a distinct use of the word from its first introduction through the Italian *antico*.

4. seething brains. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, III, iii, 64; *Macbeth*, II, i, 39; *The Tempest*, V, i, 60.

5–6. apprehend . . . comprehend. "There are two ways of seeing: one is to comprehend, which is to see all round a thing, or to

More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven:
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

HIPPOLYTA. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

THESEUS. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

16. **shapes** | shape Pope. — **airy** Q_2 | aire F_1.

embrace it; one is to apprehend, which is to see it in part, or to take hold of it." — Patmore.

11. **brow of Egypt**: swarthy face of a gypsy. "Darkness was a blemish in the age which adored the blonde Elizabeth." — Chambers.

26. **constancy**: consistency. Murray gives here the obsolete sense 'certainty.' Cf. 'constant' in *Twelfth Night*, IV, ii, 53.

27. **howsoever**: at all events. — **admirable**: wonderful.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS. Come now: what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE. Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS. Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE. There is a brief how many sports are ripe;
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper*]

29. *Enter* LYSANDER . . . | Enter Louers; Lysander . . . QqFf (after line 27).
38. **Philostrate** Qq | Egeus Ff.
39, 42, 61. PHILOSTRATE | Philostrate Q_1 | Philo. Q_2 | Ege. Ff.
42. **ripe** Q_1 | rife Q_2Ff.
43. [*Giving a paper*] Theobald.

34. **after-supper**: last course at supper, dessert. This was often called the 'rere-supper' or 'rear-supper.' Schmidt's interpretation is 'the time after supper.'

39. **abridgment**: means of shortening or whiling away time, pastime. It is possible that it may have reference to a dramatic performance that crowds the events of a long period into a brief space of time. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 439.

THESEUS. [*Reads*] 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'

We'll none of that; that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

[*Reads*] 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'

That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

[*Reads*] 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary.'

That is some satire, keen and critical,
Nor sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

[*Reads*] 'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'

Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE. A play it is, my lord, some ten words long,

44. THESEUS. [*Reads*] Theobald | The. Q1 | Thes. Q2 | Lis. Ff.

44–60. This arrangement follows the Quartos. In the Folios Lysander reads the brief and Theseus makes the comments.

44. Probably the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapithæ.

49. Orpheus was killed by Thracian Bacchanals.

52–53. For supposed allusion here either to Spenser or to Greene, see Introduction, Date of Composition.

54. critical: censorious. Cf. Iago's well-known words, *Othello*, II, i, 120: "I am nothing, if not critical."

59. In the desire for an epithet to contrast with 'snow,' editors have suggested 'swarthy,' 'scorching,' 'strong,' 'seething,' 'sooty,' 'orange,' etc. Pronounce 'wondrous' as a trisyllable. Cf. Abbott, § 477.

Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted.
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS. What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE. Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS. And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world,
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS. I will hear that play;
For never any thing can be amiss,

75. **nuptial** QqF1 | nuptials F2F3F4.

74. **unbreath'd**: unpractised. Cf. 'breath'd,' *As You Like It*, I, ii, 230; 'breathing time,' *Hamlet*, V, ii, 181. "The figure is from exercising horses, and so getting them into good wind."— Deighton.

79–80. "'Intents' here, as the subject of the two verbs, 'stretch'd' and 'conn'd,' is used both for 'endeavor,' and for the 'object of endeavor.'"— Grant White.

When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in; and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit* PHILOSTRATE].

HIPPOLYTA. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd,
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake;
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;

84. [*Exit* . . . Pope | QqFf omit. 95. Where QqFf | When Hanmer.

91–92. noble respect . . . not merit: the courtesy and consideration of a noble mind estimate according to the ability of the doer, not according to the worth of the thing done. Cf. the expression, "take the will for the deed." Coleridge suggested as an emendation:

> And what poor duty cannot do, yet would,
> Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

93. clerks: scholars. Elaborate addresses were made to Elizabeth when she visited Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1566.

95–99. In *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, Nichols tells of an incident of this kind taking place at Warwick. As Elizabeth is said to have been flattered by the compliment involved in the man's embarrassment, some find here a compliment to the queen.

And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHILOSTRATE. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets*]

Enter QUINCE *for the* Prologue

PROLOGUE. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,

106. *Re-enter* . . . Capell | QqFf So Qq | *Egeus* Ff. omit. — PHILOSTRATE. So . . . | *Phil.* 108. Scene II Pope.

106. "A Prologue, he that beginneth, or playeth before, the game, Enterlude or Commedie." Cotgrave. — **address'd**: ready. Cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III, i, 29.

108–117. In Shakespeare's day mis-punctuation was already an old stage trick, Udall having employed it to good effect in *Roister Doister* in the famous letter the hero writes to Dame Custance. Had Prologue stood "upon points," his speech would have read somewhat as follows:

If we offend, it is with our good will
That you should think we come not to offend,
But with good will to show our simple skill:
That is the true beginning. Of our end
Consider then. We come; but in despite
We do not come. As minding to content you,
Our true intent is all for your delight.
We are not here, that you should here repent you.
The actors are at hand; and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you.
The actors are at hand; and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know. [*Exit*]

THESEUS. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA. Indeed he hath play'd on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter with a trumpet before them PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION

PROLOGUE. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show:
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady, Thisby is certain.

126. *Enter with a trumpet before them* PYRAMUS . . . LION | Tawyer with a Trumpet before them. Enter Pyramus . . . Lyon Ff.

123. **recorder**: a wind instrument of the flageolet kind. "The Figure of Recorders, and Flutes, and Pipes, are straight; But the Recorder hath a less Bore and a greater." — Bacon, *Sylva*.

126. *Enter with a trumpet*... The 'Tawyer' of the First Folio stage direction was an actor in Shakespeare's company, "a subordinate in the pay of Hemmings (Heming), his burial at St. Saviour's in June, 1625, being thus noticed in the sexton's MS. notebook: 'William Tawier, Mr. Heminges man, gr. and cl., xvj. *d.*'" — Halliwell-Phillipps.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine: for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt* PROLOGUE, PYRAMUS, THISBE, LION, *and* MOONSHINE]

THESEUS. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

134. **lantern** | lanterne Q_1 Lanthorne Q_2Ff (see note below).
138. **grisly** | grizy F_1.
140. **scare** F_3F_4 | scarre QqF$_1$F$_2$.
144. **trusty** Qq | F_1 omits | gentle $F_2F_3F_4$.
150. [*Exeunt* PROLOGUE . . . MOONSHINE] Exit all but Wall F_1.

130. **lime**. Some editors read 'loam' to conform to line 160.

134. **lantern**. 'Lanthorn(e)' represents popular etymology and pronunciation. In lines 235–255 Camb makes Theseus and Demetrius say 'lantern,' the artizans 'lanthorn.'

138. **grisly**: terrible. — **hight**: called. All through these lines is gentle satire of archaic, affected, and euphuistic diction.

DEMETRIUS. No wonder, my lord; one lion may, when many asses do.

WALL. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

THESEUS. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

THESEUS. Pyramus draws near the wall; silence!

Enter PYRAMUS

PYRAMUS. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!

172. **O sweet, O** Qq | thou sweet and Ff | O sweet and Pope. **173. stand'st** | standst Q_1 | stands $Q_2F_1F_3F_4$ | standes F_2.

158. **Pyramus and Thisby**. Pronounce 'Pyr'mus and This-by'.'

165. It is possible that there is an allusion here to the ludicrous 'partitions,' so carefully distinguished from 'divisions,' in sixteenth century argumentations and expositions.

168–179. A burlesque upon the tendency of some Elizabethan dramatists to exclamations and interjectional phrases.

Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[WALL *holds up his fingers*]
Thanks, courteous wall; Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

PYRAMUS. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue; she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Re-enter THISBE

THISBE. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.
PYRAMUS. I see a voice; now will I to the chink,
To spy and I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!
THISBE. My love thou art, my love I think.
PYRAMUS. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.
THISBE. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

175. [WALL *holds . . . fingers*] C pell | QqFf omit.
183. now Qq | Ff omit.
191. and QqFf | an Pope. — hear QqF1 | see F2F3F4.
196. I QqF2 | F1F3F4 omit.

195, 196. 'Limander' is probably Bottom's blunder for 'Leander,' in which case Flute's 'Heler' is for 'Hero.' But 'Alexander' (Paris) and 'Helen' of Troy may be the lovers intended.

PYRAMUS. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

THISBE. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

PYRAMUS. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

THISBE. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

PYRAMUS. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

THISBE. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt* PYRAMUS *and* THISBE]

WALL. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit*]

THESEUS. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

HIPPOLYTA. This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

THESEUS. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Re-enter LION *and* MOONSHINE

LION. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,

205. **mural down** Pope | morall downe Ff | Moon vsed Qq.
216. **beasts in, a man Rowe** | beasts, in a man QqFf | beasts in a moon Theobald | beasts in, a moon Hanmer.

197, 198. Bottom and Flute mean 'Cephalus' and 'Procris.' See note, III, ii, 389.

201. **Ninny's tomb.** Quince's correction will be found, III, i, 88.

207–208. An allusion to the old proverb, "Walls have ears."

May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 't were pity on my life.

THESEUS. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THESEUS. True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion: and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour: for the goose carries not the fox. It is well; leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

MOON. This lantern doth the horned moon present;

DEMETRIUS. He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

MOON. This lantern doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' th' moon do seem to be.

THESEUS. This is the greatest error of all the rest; the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the man i' th' moon?

221. one Ff | as Qq.
222. A lion fell A Lyon fell QqFf | A lion-fell Singer | No lion fell Rowe.
224. on Qq | of Ff.
234. listen Q_1 | hearken Q_2Ff.
240. do Q_2 | doe Q_1, doth Ff.

222. A lion fell. Either (1) 'a lion skin,' or (2) 'no lion fierce.' The former interpretation seems simple and reasonable; in the latter the negative would be drawn from the following 'nor.'

DEMETRIUS. He dares not come there for the candle: for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

THESEUS. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER. Proceed, Moon.

MOON. All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern is the moon; I, the man i' th' moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS. Why, all these should be in the lantern: for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE

THISBE. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

246. aweary Q1 | weary Q2Ff.

244–245. A quibble between 'snuff,' meaning 'the burnt-out part of candle-wick,' and 'in snuff,' meaning 'in sudden vexation.' The same quibble appears in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 22: "You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff." Cf. also *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 40–41: "angry . . . took it in snuff."

252–254. Ben Jonson, in his Masque, *News from the New World Discovered in the Moon*, 1620–1621, makes some of the persons tell how Poetry, "the mistress of all discovery," has sent one of her servants to the moon "in search of truth," and he has just returned; whereupon we have the following:

Fact. Where? which is he? I must see his dog at his girdle, and the bush of thorns at his back, ere I believe it.

1 Herald. Do not trouble your faith then; for, if the bush of thorns should prove a goodly grove of oaks, in what case were you and your expectation?

2 Herald. These are stale ensigns of the stage's man in the moon, delivered down to you by musty antiquity, and are of as doubtful credit as the makers.

LION. [*Roaring*] Oh — [THISBE *runs off*]

DEMETRIUS. Well roar'd, Lion.

THESEUS. Well run, Thisbe. 260

HIPPOLYTA. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

[*The* LION *shakes* THISBE'S *mantle, and exit*]

THESEUS. Well mous'd, Lion.

DEMETRIUS. And then came Pyramus.

LYSANDER. And so the lion vanish'd. 265

Enter PYRAMUS

PYRAMUS. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams:
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
But stay, O spite! 270
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!

258. [THISBE *runs off*. The Lion roares, Thisby runs off Ff.
262. [*The* LION . . . *exit*] Capell QqFf omit.
268. gleams Staunton | beames Qq F1 | streams F2F3F4.
269. take Qq | taste Ff. — Thisby Qq | Thisbies Ff.

263. **mous'd.** Theseus is thinking of the way a cat behaves with a mouse. Cf. *King John*, II, i, 354. The expression 'a mousing owl' occurs in *Macbeth*, II, iv, 13.

264, 265. In previous editions of Hudson's Shakespeare was adopted Spedding's suggestion that these lines should be transposed.

270–281. Malone suggests that these short rhyming lines may burlesque such a passage as [illegible] Edwardes's *Damon and Pithias*:

Ye furies, all at once
On me your torments trie:
Gripe me, you greedy griefs,
And present pangues of death;
You sisters three, with cruel handes
With speed come stop my breath.

Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA. Beshrew my heart but I pity the man.

PYRAMUS. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame? Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear;
Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop. [*Stabs himself*]
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky.
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight: [*Exit* MOONSHINE]
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies*]

278. ye Qq | you Ff.
293. [*Stabs himself*] Dyce.
299. [*Exit* . . . Capell | QqFf omit.
300. [*Dies*] Capell | QqFf omit.

279–280. Bottom is here truer to strict mythology than Milton in *Lycidas*, line 75, who gives "the abhorred shears" to a Fury.

281. quell: kill. Used as a noun in *Macbeth*, I, vii, 72.

DEMETRIUS. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

THESEUS. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

THESEUS. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE

HIPPOLYTA. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus. I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS. And thus she means, videlicet: —

THISBE. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!

310. *Re-enter* THISBE | Enter Thisby Ff (after line 307).
312. **mote** Steevens | moth QqFf.
313-314. **he for . . . bless us** Qq | Ff omit. — **warrant** Collier | warnd Qq | warnt Staunton.
317. **means** Globe Camb | meanes QqFf | moans Theobald Delius.

301. The old pronunciati · ace' brings out the double pun.

313 314. **he for . . . bless us.** The omission of this passage from the Folios is doubtless due to the famous statute of James I, which imposed a heavy fine on "players who jestingly or prophanely speak or use the holy name of God."

317. **means**: utters her lam Murray gives an example of the use of this word by James I. It is still used in Scottish legal phraseology.

Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone!
Lovers, make moan.
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself*]
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends.
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies*]

THESEUS. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS. Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

338. [*Stabs herself*] Dyce | QqFf omit. 344. BOTTOM | Bot. Ff | Lyon Qq. — [*Starting up*] Capell.
341. [*Dies*] Dyce | QqFf omit.

329. **eyes were green.** Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 222.

346. **Bergomask dance**: a clownish dance after the manner of the peasants of Bergamo, a province in the state of Venice.

THESEUS. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for, when the players are all dead, there need none to be blam'd. Marry, if he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hang'd himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly, and very notably discharg'd. But, come, your Bergomask; let your epilogue alone. [*A dance*]

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy-time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt*]

Enter PUCK

PUCK. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,

351. **hang'd** Qq | hung Ff. Pope. — **lion** Rowe | Lyons QqFf.
354. [*A dance*] QqFf omit. 364. **behowls** Theobald (Warburton conj.) | beholds QqFf.
363. Scene II Capell | Scene III

363–382. Coleridge's comment upon this speech is:

Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity! So far it is Greek; — but then add, O! what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation, of English fancy! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these thirty [twenty] lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond.

366. **fordone**: exhausted. The usual meaning is 'undone.'

Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide;
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic; not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA *with their train*

OBERON. Through the house give glimmering light
By the dead and drowsy fire,
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;

376. 'Hecate' is, properly, trisyllabic, but Shakespeare always has it dissyllabic, except in *1 Henry VI*, III, ii, 64. The epithet 'triple,' found in Golding's *Ovid*, has reference to the names and realms of the goddess, — Luna, Selene, or Cynthia, in the heavens; Proserpina, Persephone, or Hecate, in the underworld; Diana, or Artemis, on earth. She was sometimes represented with three heads and three bodies.

381–382. The Robin Goodfellow stories and fairy folklore generally abound in references to the cleanly habits of the fay people. This tradition should make clear the interpretation of 'behind the door.'

383–384. Grant White's reading 'Though' for 'Through' is approved by Furness. 'By' seems to have the force of 'by means of.' Cf. Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 79–80.

And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note;
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance*]

OBERON. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,

389. **your** Q_1 | this Q_2Ff. 392. [*Song and dance*] Capell.

393–414. This speech is assigned to Oberon in the Quartos, but in the Folios it is called 'The Song,' and printed in italics.

397. **create**. Cf. 'consecrate,' line 407. In Elizabethan English past participles of verbs of Latin origin often follow the Latin form.

404. **prodigious**: portentou t. *King John*, III, i, 46.

408. **take his gait**: take his way. Cf. *King Lear*, IV, vi, 242.

Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay:
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt* OBERON, TITANIA, *and train*]

PUCK. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit*]

411, 412. Transposed in QqFf. Qq | Ff omit.
414. [*Exeunt* . . . Capell. Exeunt 430. [*Exit*] Capell | QqFf omit.

415. **shadows.** Cf. 'king of shadows,' III, ii, 347.

423. Here, of course, 'Puck' is used as a generic term.

425. **serpent's tongue.** For a similar description of 'hissing' cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, i, 140–148.

429. **Give me your hands**: applaud. Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, V, iii, 340; *The Tempest*, Epilogue, 10.

INDEX

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